

# Bang-Bang-A-Boom! by Gareth Roberts and Clayton Hickman

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## [Part One]

ELEANOR: Dark Space Eight, status report. Day 4,814 of operation. Chief Medic Eleanor Harcourt reporting. We are gradually beginning to overcome our grief at the loss of Commander Keel. The subdued mood in the corridors of the station among the 210 men and women of the crew is beginning to lift. Our new mission orders have been received, and we await the arrival of our new commander in an atmosphere of cool serenity and undisturbed tranquillity.

(Alarms sound.)

ELEANOR: Oh, I'm so sorry. I accidentally hit the Red Alert switch there. (alarm stops) Sorry, everyone. Our new commander will take the helm of Dark Space Eight on a crucial mission at a crucial moment in the history of the whole galaxy. End of status report.

IVOR: Well done, Eleanor. The Commander's death has hit us all for six, but I know how close you were.

ELEANOR: I can't help feeling responsible, Ivor.

IVOR: Oh, there's not much that anybody, even a top medic like you, can do about the Orion flu.

ELEANOR: True. But I could have stopped him going off to confront that silicon-based entity in the first place.

IVOR: Come on, Paul Keel knew the risks better than anyone. He destroyed that creature and its scheme to enslave all carbon-based life, saved the whole crew. He wasn't to know that in the process the being would infect him with an incurable plague, totally resistant to all treatment.

ELEANOR: I know. I just felt so helpless.

IVOR: Well, his replacement's due any moment. We ought to get to the shuttle dock, roll out the red carpet, hmm? Eleanor?

ELEANOR: I was just thinking.

IVOR: Oh, penny for them?

ELEANOR: A crucial mission, that's what I said on the log.

IVOR: Well

ELEANOR: It's hardly that. Dark Space Eight has seen better days. Seven years we've been out here, Ivor, on the furthest edge of known space. Seven years of adventure and intrigue. The newer stations are better equipped with fresh new crews. This mission sums it all up. Achilles Four gets the All-Worlds Peace Convention. Star Island Twelve gets the Embassy to the Shadrock Empire. What do we get? The Intergalactic Song Contest.

IVOR: Well, look on the bright side. Should be a fairly uneventful few days.

(Alarms sound briefly. Angry voices.)

IVOR: Sorry, sorry.

ELEANOR: We really must move that switch.

(Various languages, then)

STRINGBERG: Please acknowledge. Align beacon to shuttleport D. Thank you, Zellerite escort. You are clear to dock. Dark Space Eight traffic control to Breeble escort. You are now clear to dock at port F. Please proceed. Dark Space Eight traffic control to Earth Gholos escort shuttle. Please acknowledge (fades out)

(Imagine your host for the show is the late Sir Terry Wogan...)

LOGAN: (Irish) Hello. It's the 309<sup>th</sup> Intergalactic Song Contest. (sigh) This is Logan, and here I am again, here we are again. I'm with my producer, Martin. I can see him waving up at me from the reception hall, trying frantically to escape, ha, ha. The entrants are just docking here at Dark Space Eight, and the excitement's bearable. Sorry, I mean, unbearable. Or do I? 309 years, eh, and it doesn't seem a day too long. Ah, here comes the first contestant, from Angvia. It's a real pity I'm doing this broadcast on sound only, because if you could see her you'd all have a laugh. It's Ride of the Valkyries all over again. If I can just describe. You know the Angvians are a matriarchal society? This lady certainly frightens me. Makes Mrs Logan look only a wee dragon in comparison. She's a big lass, and it looks like someone's tipped a jeweller's window out on her head. Now the Angvian entry is Gor-raz A Det, which I'm told translates roughly as my love is limitless, like a black hole, and I'm pulling you over the event horizon. A sentiment we can all share, there. Of course, the planet Angvia has been locked in war with Gholos now for quite some time.

(Cheers.)

LOGAN: Oh dear, I hope she hurries along there. I can see the Gholos entry coming along. Ah yes, Gholos. Gholos, of course, is a vast gestalt entity. A sort of big, wispy, cloudy, transcendental thing. From where I'm sitting he looks just like a big ball of candyfloss. Of course, this is only one small part of Gholos. The singing

part, I imagine. His entry is, well, I'm not even going to try and pronounce that one. It's very difficult to understand the Gholos language. In fact, I see he's brought an interpreter along with him. Rather him than me.

(Cheers.)

LOGAN: Ah. Ah ha! Bet you can't guess who that is. It's our own Earth entry, young Nicky Newman, fresh-faced as ever. His mam obviously gave him a good scrub-over before she let him out today. (laughs) No shortage of volunteers for that job, of course. Those lusty screams you can hear are coming from Earth, via the vidi-globe hovering behind the lad. Maybe you should get one of those for yourself, Logan. Ah. Ah well, maybe not. Behind him I can just see the Cyrene entrant. A funny lot, those Cyrenes. A bit too much like Medusa for my liking. You wouldn't want to wake up next to one after a heavy night, I can tell you. Anyway, the Cyrene entry, and a popular choice with the space bookies, this one (continues faintly under -)

STRINDBERG: Dark Space Eight to Command shuttle. Come in, please. Respond, please.

(Door opens.)

ELEANOR: You've never actually worked with the new Commander?

(Door closes.)

IVOR: Er, no, no, just know him by repute. And it is quite a repute. He was the head of the Perseus expedition, you know.

ELEANOR: The Perseus expedition. Didn't they come into contact with a computer left behind by an ancient civilisation that tried to enslave their minds and made them believe they were living in some kind of Nirvana?

IVOR: That's the one, yes. John Ballard's quick thinking saved the day. His mind was just too strong for the computer to control.

STRINDBERG: Doctor Harcourt, Professor Fassbinder?

ELEANOR: Yes, Lieutenant?

STRINDBERG: The shuttle carrying the new commander. I'm having trouble making contact.

IVOR: It's a very busy docking schedule. Possibly our communicators can't cope with the strain of all the traffic. Electromagnetic radiation overload.

STRINDBERG: No, Professor. All the systems are functioning perfectly. I've performed all the usual checks. There's just no answer.

IVOR: Well then, I just don't know.

ELEANOR: What if we carried out a data sweep, using our forward sensor array?

IVOR: Good idea, Eleanor. Er, Lieutenant Strindberg, see to it. And switch off that drivel while you're at it.

STRINDBERG: Right away, Professor.

ELEANOR: Perhaps the shuttle's communicator has failed?

IVOR: A ship like that's top of the fleet. There's be back-up systems galore. No, it's very odd.

STRINDBERG: Professor, Doctor.

ELEANOR: What is it, Lieutenant?

STRINDBERG: These readings don't make sense. The data sweep indicates a build-up of some form of energy on board the command shuttle.

IVOR: What sort of energy?

STRINDBERG: It's some form of fluctuating chronon surge. I've never seen anything like it before.

ELEANOR: We've got to get in touch with that shuttle.

STRINDBERG: Command shuttle, come in. It's imperative that you respond.

STRINDBERG [OC]: Command shuttle, this is Dark Space Eight. Respond please. Come in, Command shuttle. There's a build-up of energy aboard your vessel. Command shuttle, this is Dark Space Eight. (continues under -)

(The Tardis materialises. Tardis door opens.)

DOCTOR: Here we are, Mel. La Maison Rouge. The finest restaurant in Paris. The air is like wine, the wine is like nectar, and I booked table cinq overlooking the twilight Seine as it snakes down to the Bois du Boulogne. Oh.

MEL: Oh, Doctor, not again.

(Tardis door closes.)

DOCTOR: Um. Perhaps there's been a power cut. Henri! Henri! C'est le Docteur!

MEL: Stop trying to wriggle out of it. This isn't Paris, and you know it.

DOCTOR: Mmm, I'll admit the corrugated iron isn't quite in keeping with the usual Parisian ambience.

MEL: Lost again.

DOCTOR: Well, if you want to know the way, ask a gendarme. Come along. There's a light up ahead.

MEL: Air like wine, you said.

DOCTOR: No, more like a mercurial compound mixed with something nitric and nasty.

STRINDBERG [OC]: Respond Command shuttle.

MEL: Command shuttle? This is a spaceship. We're nowhere near Paris.

DOCTOR: Unless it's heading for France.

MEL: Oh, give it up, Doctor. I oh! Oh no.  
DOCTOR: Two of them. Poor fellows.  
MEL: Doctor, they're dead. What was it you said? Something nitric?  
DOCTOR: Yes. They were gassed. The vapour's dispersed, luckily for us.  
STRINDBERG [OC]: It's no good, sir.  
MEL: Let's respond, let them know what's happened.  
DOCTOR: Wait. What's that noise?  
MEL: I can't hear anything.  
DOCTOR: Shh.  
(Ticking.)  
MEL: It's coming from the controls, down there.  
DOCTOR: There's something attached. Oh dear.  
MEL: It's not a bomb. It's a bomb!  
DOCTOR: Run, Mel! The Tardis.  
(Boom!)

(Alarms.)  
STRINDBERG: Confirmed. The shuttle has exploded. Total destruction.  
ELEANOR: Will somebody kill that alarm? Please? Thank you.  
IVOR: I hope we got them out in time.  
ELEANOR: The matter-beam pad. Something's coming through.  
DOCTOR: Quickly. What?  
MEL: Huh?  
ELEANOR: Thank goodness.  
IVOR: We must have locked onto their lifesigns just in time.  
ELEANOR: Commander?  
DOCTOR: Er, parlez-vous français?  
MEL: (sotto) Give it up, Doctor.  
ELEANOR: He must be disorientated.  
IVOR: Lieutenant Strindberg, fetch some water.  
STRINDBERG: Sir.  
ELEANOR: Commander Ballard, Chief Medical Officer Eleanor Harcourt reporting. What happened out there, sir? Was there a malfunction on the shuttle?  
DOCTOR: Ah, er, yes, er, no, well, I'm not certain. I mean, it all happened so quickly.  
ELEANOR: We detected an energy flare. Pilot, didn't you hear us trying to contact you? Pilot.  
MEL: Me? Ah, er, ah, er, no. No, we didn't hear a thing.  
STRINDBERG: Here, drink these.  
MEL: Thank you. Oh, that's better.  
IVOR: Yes, what did I tell you. It must have been an overload of magnetic radiation.  
ELEANOR: Enough to destroy the shuttle?  
IVOR: I just don't know, Eleanor. Radiation of that kind is pretty unpredictable.  
ELEANOR: I think we should let the Commander and er  
MEL: Mel. Er, Pilot Melanie Bush.  
ELEANOR: The Commander and Pilot Bush rest, Ivor. I'll show you to your living quarters.  
DOCTOR: Oh, thank you, Doctor. Lead on. Well done, Mel. You really are very good at that sort of thing.  
MEL: Travelling with you I have to be. What's the plan, then? Use our new aliases to get back to the Tardis?  
It must be floating about out there in space.  
DOCTOR: Ah yes, a very good idea.  
MEL: You mean, that wasn't your plan?  
DOCTOR: Oh, I didn't have a plan. I was just making it up as I went along.

(Fizzing sound.)  
LOOZLY: Yes, yes, I am as concerned as you are. I quite agree, Gholos. There must be an investigation. Security here is a joke. I will draft a strongly worded letter to ah. What have we here?  
ELEANOR: And round this corner here is where we were invaded by the Arcons of Aristarcus.  
DOCTOR: Really? How interesting.  
LOOZLY: Ah, excuse me. Are you in what passes for a position of authority on this hulk?  
ELEANOR: I am the station's Chief Medical Officer, Doctor Eleanor  
LOOZLY: What has happened to the Commander's shuttle? We saw it blow up.  
ELEANOR: This is the Commander.  
LOOZLY: You?  
DOCTOR: Yes. Appearances aren't everything.  
MEL: We were teleported off the shuttle just in time.

ELEANOR: It was simply a technical fault. Our people are looking into it. Luckily, Commander Ballard was rescued. Forgive me, you are?

LOOZLY: Don't you recognise the entity Gholos?

DOCTOR: Ah. The entity Gholos. Of course. How do you do? How is life in the gestalt these days? Oh, how fascinating.

LOOZLY: You speak Gholosian?

DOCTOR: Ah, no, of course not. Rather a complicated tongue even for as keen a student of linguistics as myself.

LOOZLY: It took me fifteen years of advanced study to grasp the bare rudiments. And you're wrong, Commander. Gholosian isn't a tongue of any kind. Rather a complex series of signals framed in semiotic strings.

(A short Gholosian fizz required a lot of words, a long one, not very many.)

MEL: I get it. You're the interpreter.

LOOZLY: A system of communication eminently richer and more complex than any humanoid language.

ELEANOR: Excuse me, Mister?

LOOZLY: Loozly.

ELEANOR: Mister Loozly, but I have to take the Commander and his Pilot to their quarters. They've been through a very stressful experience out there in space.

LOOZLY: Gholos too finds the current situation stressful, but I

(A high-pitched voice very like Alpha Centauri.)

CYRENE: I must speak to somebody in authority at once.

MEL: Oh, no. Er, Commander, I think you'd better take charge of the situation.

CYRENE: What has happened to the shuttle? Could this be an alien attack, or sabotage?

LOOZLY: Well, Cyrenean, Gholos was just trying to ascertain the very same thing.

CYRENE: Our lives are in danger.

LOOZLY: We must know the truth.

CYRENE: Yes, we have a right to be told.

LOOZLY: Gholos is anxious that the proper authorities be informed at once if there is even the slightest threat to our persons.

CYRENE: I am in accord.

ELEANOR: As I have explained, there is absolutely (fades under)

MEL: Doctor.

DOCTOR: Pass me your whistle.

MEL: What whistle?

DOCTOR: The one in your jacket pocket.

MEL: Eh? How did that get there?

(The Doctor blows a referee's whistle.)

DOCTOR: Thank you. Now, given the er, delicate nature of the current affairs, you are rightly concerned. But we all have to pull together for the good of the er, the conference, er, convention, er

ELEANOR: The Intergalactic Song Contest.

MEL: The what? I mean, of course. The Intergalactic Song Contest.

DOCTOR: Absolutely. A full investigation will be carried out into the explosion, gentlemen.

CYRENE: *Gentlemen?*

DOCTOR: Gentlepersons. Er, gentlebeings. So, please go back to your quarters and prepare for the er Song Contest. All this shouting is bad for your vocal chords, or whatever it is you'll be using to sing with.

LOOZLY: Commander, what you may not realise, and what Gholos has confirmed to me, is that the explosion of your shuttle displayed the unmistakable blast pattern of an Angvian scatter-bomb.

CYRENE: No! Surely even the Angvians would not be so bold. We are merely entertainers. I only came here to raise my galactic profile. I have no interest in politics.

LOOZLY: Neither has Gholos. He has entertained the gestalt with his song-stories for seven cycles. (talks under -)

ELEANOR: Oh, Mister Loozly, please, you've caused nothing but disruption since you came here. (Whistle blown.)

MEL: Quiet, all of you.

(Enter Magenta, or Belazs if you prefer.)

ANGVIA: Well spoken, girl. You are commander?

DOCTOR: What? Yes.

ANGVIA: This child has shown more strength than you dealing with these squabbling fools.

ELEANOR: Queen Angvia, I presume.

ANGVIA: Ha. And this woman, she shows more brain than you, little man.

CYRENE: Protect us, Commander. An Angvian warship is probably already on the way.

ANGVIA: Pah! I see Angvia is to be blamed for everything as usual. We did not destroy the craft.

LOOZLY: Gholos will not accept the word of any Angvian. Your primitive race has shown its treacherous

nature on many occasions.

ANGVIA: Ha, ha, ha! It was not the people of Angvia who broke the Peace Treaty of Tenebros Four.

LOOZLY: And it was not Gholos who settled the fringe planets of the Zordon Nebula, in direct contradiction of the Treaty's terms.

ANGVIA: Our battle cruisers were invited in by the peoples of Zordon.

MEL: Please, this is getting us nowhere.

DOCTOR: Quite. As I said, return to your quarters.

CYRENE: And wait for the Angvian attack?

ANGVIA: Good creatures, why would our mighty armies concern themselves with this contest? I am here for the same reason as all of you. To sing. My monologues are famous the wide galaxy over. The only politics I care for are the politics of this contest. Commander, the running order of the songs is a clear attempt by Earth to marginalise us.

ELEANOR: The running order was decided fairly, by lot.

ANGVIA: And we of Angvia are almost last.

CYRENE: Yes, you'll never get a chance to sing one of your precious monologues before your heavy cruisers blast this station into so much space debris.

DOCTOR: I'm sure we can sort this matter out amicably.

ANGVIA: I have never appeared so low down on a bill, even when I supported the Frezznix of Rass.

LOOZLY: Gholos has a suggestion. Why don't the planets appear in alphabetical order?

DOCTOR: An excellent idea. Very diplomatic. Thank you, Gholos.

LOOZLY: Gholos is sure the viewing billions will be glad Angvia is over and done with so near the start.

ANGVIA: Ah, how dare you!

DOCTOR: Good. Now, all settled? Come along, Mel. Doctor Handcraft?

ELEANOR: It's Harcourt, Commander.

DOCTOR: (receding) Oh yes. Oh, I'm so sorry. Yes, let's get to our quarters, eh?

LOOZLY: Well, as far as I'm concerned, the Angvia situation is something of a waste of time. We do not need any (arguments fade)

ELEANOR: Your lifesigns seem to be normal. I suggest you rest for a couple of hours. The contest doesn't begin until 2000 hours station time.

DOCTOR: Thank you, Doctor Har

MEL: Harcourt.

DOCTOR: Court.

ELEANOR: I'm sorry your welcome didn't go quite as planned, Commander, but with the Peace Conference in session on Achilles Four, everyone is rather on edge. War is uppermost in the minds of us all.

DOCTOR: Yes, of course. Quite understand. Achilles Four, yes. That conference between er

ELEANOR: Between Gholos and Angvia, Commander. You're quite sure that there isn't any lingering disorientation?

DOCTOR: Er, no, no, no. Fit as a tree. Thank you again, Doctor.

ELEANOR: A pleasure, Commander. Now I must return to my duties.

(Door opens and closes.)

MEL: All right. Are you going to explain all that brouhaha out in the corridor?

DOCTOR: The what?

MEL: The brouhaha. The argument.

DOCTOR: Well, it's all rather interesting, actually. Angvia and Gholos are neighbouring empires.

MEL: And deadly enemies. That much was obvious.

DOCTOR: For many centuries they've been at each other's opposable organs. Don't you know your history, Mel?

MEL: We only got as far as Tudors and Stuarts, Doctor.

DOCTOR: The Tudors. Splendid chaps, all of them.

MEL: Hmm. Back to the point.

DOCTOR: Centuries of bitter territorial conflict, border intrusions, neighbours from hell indeed.

MEL: A dislike for the unlike?

DOCTOR: Not really. They're both pretty horrible. This contest is fascinating, Mel. A pivotal moment in universal history. Must be the first time Gholos and Angvia have been in the same corridor without trying to evaporate each other.

MEL: Never mind all that now. We've got to get the Tardis back.

DOCTOR: The Tardis? Oh yes. Oh well, there's no need to hurry. Fools rush in where horses fear to drink.

MEL: You're getting interested and involved, aren't you?

DOCTOR: Does it show? Come on, Mel, don't deny you love a good sing-song.

MEL: And you love a good mystery.

DOCTOR: Then we'll both be as happy as sandcastles.

MEL: You're the Commander, right? Why not contact that scientist and get him to scan the debris from the

shuttle. Then he can use a tractor beam to bring in the Tardis.

DOCTOR: Oh, yes. One of those. Good idea. Ah, this must be my communicator. (beep) Hello. Is that the Science Officer?

IVOR [OC]: Yes, Commander. Fassbinder here.

DOCTOR: Hello. I'd like you to scan the debris from the shuttle. Use the tractor beam to bring in anything of interest for analysis.

IVOR [OC]: Right away, Commander. (beep)

DOCTOR: Do you know, I've always wanted one of these. Commander's perks. Ah, this must be my uniform. Very heroic.

MEL: Before you get totally carried away, aren't you forgetting something?

DOCTOR: I don't know. You'll have to remind me. Oh, this jacket fits like a glove.

MEL: Doctor, we found a bomb on that shuttle. Somebody was trying to kill the Commander, and by taking his identity you've painted us into a very dangerous corner.

DOCTOR: Yes, perhaps you're right, Mel. We must tread carefully. Softly, softly catches the worm, eh, Mel?

MEL: Would you please stop doing that proverb thing, Doctor? It's really annoying.

DOCTOR: Oh. Sorry.

ELEANOR: Dark Space Eight status report, day 4,815 of operation. Chief Medic Eleanor Harcourt reporting. We are continuing to investigate the mysterious explosion of the Commander's shuttle as the contest draws near. Commander Ballard is an intriguing man, with a natural air of authority and dignity, and I hope our relationship will be as interesting, rewarding and close as that between myself and Commander Keel. Harcourt out.

LOGAN: Welcome back. Ha, ha, ha. It's busy, busy, busy here in the great Concert Hall, formerly the Quarantine Area, ha, ha. Well, not really. That noise you can hear is the Cyrene backing band tuning up. (Gurgles doing tuneful scales.)

LOGAN: Nothing to do with Mrs Logan's packed lunch which is resting lightly on my tummy. Apparently there was a bit of a surprise when the new Base Commander's shuttle ran into a meteor cloud or something, but I'm told he's quite safe. A cynic might think that the poor fellow was trying to get out of watching the contest. Surely not. Anyway, I believe the Neutral Arbiter has just docked.

DOCTOR: Ah, that really suits you, Mel. You look good in epaulettes.

MEL: Mmm. A mere ensign, though, Commander. Listen, I think I'll make my way to the science lab, find out if they've made any progress with the Tardis.

DOCTOR: Good idea.

(Beep.)

DOCTOR: Oh, is that me or you?

MEL: It's you. See you later. Don't get involved.

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: Ah, hello, this is the Do... Commander. Can I help you?

ELEANOR [OC]: Commander Ballard. I'm sorry to disturb you, sir, but your presence is urgently required on the Command Deck.

DOCTOR: Oh, right, yes. I'll be right up. (beep) Mel did warn me not to get involved, but getting involved is my stock-in-trade, and it is a very nice uniform which I must show off to someone.

MEL: Hello? Professor Fassbinder?

IVOR: Oh, hello, young lady.

MEL: Melanie. Known as Mel.

IVOR: And how can I help you, Mel?

MEL: Well. Oh, excuse me, but what are you doing? It looks very interesting.

IVOR: Oh, this? Er, it's a device for er, for measuring proton strings in the twelfth dimension.

MEL: I see. Well, no, I don't. Why are you doing that?

IVOR: Why? Er, to er, to see if the er, if the proton strings behave differently under, under a different set of er dimensions, of course.

MEL: Oh. What have you discovered so far?

IVOR: I just er don't know. The wave equations are very, very complex.

MEL: I could give you a hand. No, hold on. Mustn't get involved. And it's all over my head. What I came to ask was, did you find anything in the debris of the shuttle?

IVOR: No, nothing as yet. Er, I've set the data calibrators to the widest possible three hundred and sixty degree sweeps, so, ooo, it'll take a little longer.

MEL: Well, be sure to give either the Commander or me a call when, if anything turns up. I'll leave you to your proton strings.

IVOR: Yes.

(Mel leaves.)

IVOR: Well, Melanie, known as Mel, I don't like little girls who ask too many questions.

STRINDBERG: Please madam, sit down.

ANGVIA: This is a deliberate insult to the people of Angvia.

STRINDBERG: You'll get nowhere if you shout.

ANGVIA: Is that your philosophy? No shouting! No surprise you're all such weaklings on this side of the galaxy.

ELEANOR: The Commander is on his way. Ah, here he is now.

DOCTOR: Ah, I've finally found my way back. Now, how can I help you?

ELEANOR: Commander

ANGVIA: I have been placed in quarters right next to Gholos. This is either incompetence or a gross and deliberate insult.

DOCTOR: Ah, don't worry. I'm sure it was just incompetence. It usually is with us humans.

ELEANOR: Here's the accommodation plan, Commander.

DOCTOR: Ah yes, I see the problem. Now, why don't you move here?

ANGVIA: Next to Cyrene?

DOCTOR: Ah, yes.

ANGVIA: After all the insults heaped on my people earlier?

DOCTOR: All right. Next to Earth?

ANGVIA: Ha! So you can spy on me?

DOCTOR: Next to er

ANGVIA: Do not go on, Commander. All your suggestions are equally ludicrous. You obviously have as little idea about conference management as you do about flying a shuttle!

ELEANOR: Really. That's most

DOCTOR: Where's Mel with that whistle? Ah, Mel. No, not Mel. Not Mel at all. Some sort of pipe-y rodent thing.

ELEANOR: Oh, what a relief. Commander Ballard, Queen Angvia, let me introduce you to the Neutral Arbiter of the song contest.

DOCTOR: Ah, hello, Miss er. Don't I know you?

GERI: (high pitched) I believe to Earth creatures we Pakhars all look the same.

(Sounds exactly like Cyrene – same actress.)

DOCTOR: Pakhars, of course!

ELEANOR: Commander, let me introduce Geri Pakhar.

GERI: A pleasure. Eek.

MEL: Ah. Oh, there aren't any buttons. There must be some way of getting this thing working. Er

NICKY: Guest rooms.

(Turbolift operates.)

MEL: Oh, well done. I don't have much luck with lifts.

NICKY: Look, just give me whatever you want signed and I'll sign it.

MEL: What? What do you mean? I

NICKY: Fine. Forget it, then. Your loss.

MEL: So, are you here for the contest, or do you work here?

NICKY: Don't you know who I am?

MEL: I'm afraid not.

NICKY: Really? You really don't know who I am?

MEL: I'm new to these parts.

NICKY: But I'm the fifth most famous person in the galaxy, as voted by the readers of Entropy Magazine.

MEL: I'm sorry.

NICKY: Sorry?

MEL: I don't really keep up with all the celebrity gossip.

NICKY: What's your name?

MEL: Melanie. Known as Mel. And you are?

NICKY: And *you* are? And you are? I can't remember the last time anybody asked me my name. Come here.

(Kiss.)

MEL: Oh. (giggles)

DOCTOR: Now, I'm sure we can sort everything out quite amicably. Pass me the accommodation plan, Lieutenant. (Lef-tenant)

STRINDBERG: Loo-tenant.

DOCTOR: Oh yes, sorry. Now, where are we? Madam, I will move you here, if that's all right.

ANGVIA: I suppose it is acceptable.

ELEANOR: As long as the Breebles don't mind switching rooms  
GERI: I am sure they will see the problem and be keen to help out any way they can.  
DOCTOR: There we are. Everything sorted out, nice and ship-shape. Now then  
(Door opens.)  
LOOZLY: Commander, I must protest.  
DOCTOR: Oh no.  
LOOZLY: Gholos is enraged.  
DOCTOR: Oh, really? I'd never have guessed.  
LOOZLY: Our quarters are directly next to  
ANGVIA: No, they are not. The Commander has seen the gross insult of placing me next to you, and assigned me a room at the far end of the block.  
LOOZLY: Gholos is very angry, Commander. It is he who should have been moved away from her.  
DOCTOR: Yes, well, first come first served, as we say on Earth. Now, how about you two going back to your rooms and preparing for the contest.  
ANGVIA: I will be happy to, now I do not have the stench of Gholos under my nose.  
DOCTOR: Gholos?  
LOOZLY: Under protest.  
ELEANOR: I'd better get back to the medical unit. Well handled, Commander, or may I call you John?  
DOCTOR: Eh? Oh yes, of course, Elaine.  
ELEANOR: Eleanor.  
DOCTOR: Eleanor.

(Walking.)

NICKY: At last, someone I can have a proper conversation with. Somebody who knows as little about me as I know about them. Listen, don't rush off. Have you got a few minutes?  
MEL: All the time in the world. Literally.  
NICKY: Let me tell you all about myself. No, I mean, you tell me all about yourself.  
MEL: I'll try. Er, what is your name?  
NICKY: What is your name. What is your name. I love it.  
MEL: Please.  
NICKY: Nicky Newman. Great!  
MEL: What?  
NICKY: Well, for a moment there I was afraid you'd say, oh, that Nicky Newman, the pop star.  
MEL: No, really, I haven't the faintest idea who you are.  
NICKY: Me? I'm just a bloke. (laughs) Just a bloke.

DOCTOR: Now, where was I?  
STRINDBERG: Would you sign these reports, sir?  
DOCTOR: Yes, of course. John Ballard. Thank you.  
STRINDBERG: Sir.  
DOCTOR: Hmm. Is this my chair? Very comfy. And all these buttons.  
GERI: Commander?  
DOCTOR: Hmm?  
GERI: I very much admired your handling of the earlier situation. You were almost Pakhar-like in your diplomacy.  
DOCTOR: Yes, I suppose I was quite impressive, wasn't I?  
GERI: Citizens of Gholos and Angvia rarely meet. When they come face to face, as it were, it can be very unpleasant and undiplomatic. At this delicate time, we must all beware the tensions between Gholos and Angvia.  
DOCTOR: Ah yes, the Peace Conference on Achilles Four.  
(Geri sighs.)  
DOCTOR: You seem a little troubled.  
GERI: Oh, Commander, my sister is an observer at the conference. I couldn't help but be a little worried when I saw those two tearing strips off each other. Poor Teri, on the other side of space, having to cope with hordes of Angvians and Gholosians. At least we only have two on our hands. Oh, why can't all the races of the galaxy live in peace like the people of my planet?  
DOCTOR: That's what makes you such good diplomats. You know, I don't think I've ever visited Pakhar.  
GERI: It is a place of serenity and tranquillity, Commander. We Pakhars are content to trade, work, and relax in utter harmony. All is calm. No voices are raised. Nothing but the gentle turning of our work wheels and the sighing of the waves as they lap the distant shores.  
(Alarm sounds.)  
DOCTOR: Ah, you were asking for that. What is it, Lieutenant?  
STRINDBERG: An alarm, sir.



DOCTOR: I guessed that. What about?  
STRINDBERG: It, it's coming from the guest rooms, sir.  
DOCTOR: Quick, Arbiter.  
GERI: Oh dear, what now?

MEL: What is it?  
NICKY: It's an alarm.  
MEL: I know that. I meant, what's it in aid of?  
NICKY: It's coming from down here.  
MEL: Come on, then. Let's take a look.  
(Running.)  
NICKY: This is my cabin. It's coming from next door. That's Cyrene's room.  
MEL: Help me get this door open. (knocks) Hello? Hello? Are you all right in there?  
(Door opens.)  
MEL: Oh, no. I don't like the look of this. How do we get the lights on?  
NICKY: Over here.  
(Lights on.)  
NICKY: Oh God. She's had some sort of accident.  
MEL: I don't know much about Cyrene metabolism, but I think she's dead.  
NICKY: Oh no.  
MEL: And you only have to look at her face to see that this was no accident. We have to face facts, Nicky. There's a murderer loose aboard Dark Space Eight.

## [Part Two]

ELEANOR: I heard the alarm. Oh, my God. Please, stand away. I must examine her.  
MEL: It looks like she pressed the alarm and then collapsed.  
NICKY: God, that alarm is really getting on my nerves. How do we switch it off?  
MEL: There's a dead body in the room, and you prioritise the alarm?  
(Alarm stops.)  
NICKY: Actually, I was trying not to think about the dead body, thanks.  
ELEANOR: I'm afraid there's nothing I can do for her. I feel so helpless.  
MEL: How did she die? She looks terrified.  
ELEANOR: It's hard to tell, but there are no abrasions or contusions. Without a thorough medical scan I can't make a full diagnosis, but it looks to be natural causes.  
MEL: What?  
GERI: What has happened? Oh no.  
DOCTOR: Eleanor, is she  
ELEANOR: I'm afraid so. She's dead, John.  
DOCTOR: Let me see.  
GERI: Oh, this is awful. Awful. Oh, Nicky Newman! (giggles.)  
NICKY: Oh, God.  
IVOR: Whatever was all the commotion... oh, no.  
MEL: It's like Piccadilly Circus in here.  
GERI: What has happened to the Cyrene contestant, Doctor?  
DOCTOR: Well, you see that er. Oh, I think er, she was talking to you.  
ELEANOR: What? Oh, there's really no cause for panic. At the moment I cannot identify the precise cause of Cyrene's death, but I think we can rule out foul play.  
(The Doctor and Mel groan.)  
GERI: What a relief!  
DOCTOR: I'm afraid not. Look at these marks.  
ELEANOR: Those? I assumed they were part of Cyrene's distinctive colouring.  
DOCTOR: Decidedly not. Poison, I fancy.  
(Groans.)  
GERI: Poison? Oh, no.  
DOCTOR: I suggest you take a sample for analysis, Doctor Harcourt.  
ELEANOR: Of course.  
DOCTOR: And I further suggest that we leave the Doctor to her work, and reconvene in the rest room.  
ELEANOR: The rest room?  
DOCTOR: I mean the er guest lounge.  
  
MEL: Look, everyone, I think we need to relax and take stock. We still don't know for sure that Cyrene was poisoned.

GERI: Could you pass me the nuts, please?

IVOR: Marvellous. One of the contestants has just been murdered, and all the Neutral Arbiter can think about is nuts.

GERI: I always snack when I'm nervous. Actually, I don't know whether I'm more nervous about the murder or meeting Nicky. (giggles)

NICKY: Oh, God.

DOCTOR: Please, calm down, Mister Loozly.

LOOZLY: Cyrene is an old ally of Gholos. Gholos is adamant Cyrene was murdered by Angvia.

ANGVIA: Commander cannot listen to these ravings and these ramblings.

NICKY: Look, you two, can't you calm it down a bit?

ANGVIA: Who is this Earth creature? Ah, it is Nicky Newman. Greetings from Angvia.

NICKY: This is only a song contest, for goodness' sakes.

LOOZLY: Gholos thinks the contest should be cancelled immediately.

GERI: Cancelled?

DOCTOR: No, that's out of the question. We don't want to send out the wrong signals, especially not with that Peace Conference in session. Now everybody, calm down.

MEL: Come on, Mister Loozly, sit down and have a drink.

LOOZLY: Certainly not.

MEL: Oh, take a break. Get a bit of human company for a change.

LOOZLY: The company of Gholos is more than adequate. Gholos wishes me to compose a strongly worded official letter of complaint. Good day. (leaves)

ANGVIA: Cretinous man, to want to spend his life with those hideous creatures.

DOCTOR: The people of Gholos deserve our respect.

ANGVIA: They are killers! Thirty generations ago, their raiding parties descended from the skies onto our peaceful pastoral settlements. We were forced to become warriors merely in order to survive.

DOCTOR: Well, it takes two to foxtrot.

ANGVIA: You know nothing of our history, Commander. None of you do. Have you ever seen somebody by one of Gholos? It is hideous. The creature glows blue, it crackles with hatred, it stinks. Do you want to die like that? Be on your guard, all of you. (leaves)

NICKY: Hold on. Are all of you thinking what I'm thinking?

GERI: The blue sting of Gholos

IVOR: Could have killed Cyrene.

DOCTOR: Nonsense. It's very dangerous to speculate. Eleanor will provide an answer. Until she does, careless talk, and all that.

GERI: It's what I've always feared. The contest could become a grudge match, a chance to try and settle old scores.

IVOR: Actually, Miss Pakhar.

GERI: Yes, Professor?

IVOR: I'm rather surprised to see you here. Isn't it a bit of a come-down for one of the great Pakhars to be overseeing a mere song contest?

GERI: Certainly not. I treat this appointment as prestigious in the extreme. I'm sorry to find that some of the staff of Dark Space Eight don't appear to share my view. I think I shall go to my cabin. Huh. (leaves)

IVOR: Huh. Sniffy lot, these Pakhars. Can one of you pass the wine?

NICKY: Oh no, I've just realised.

MEL: What?

NICKY: I'm meant to be doing a subspace interview in ten minutes. I'd better get off. Look, don't slip away. You still haven't told me all about yourself.

MEL: It won't take long. I'm hardly famous or interesting.

NICKY: Exactly. I've had enough of famous interesting people.

IVOR: And if you'll excuse me, Commander, I must get back to the lab, see if anything has come through on the er scan of your shuttle.

DOCTOR: Very well.

(Ivor leaves.)

DOCTOR: Alone at last.

MEL: Look at you.

DOCTOR: What?

MEL: You're loving every minute of this, aren't you, Commander?

DOCTOR: Until we can get the Tardis back, we've got to play along. Unless you fancy a lot of tedious being locked up, accused, and interrogated?

MEL: And playing Poirot has got nothing to do with it?

DOCTOR: Someone killed Commander Ballard, and someone, possibly the same someone, killed the Cyrene. Why?

MEL: At the risk of repeating myself, none of our business.

DOCTOR: Come on, Mel. Every Poirot needs his Watson.

MEL: Hastings.

DOCTOR: Lovely place. What about it?

MEL: Oh, I despair. Okay, I can play the side-kick. What do you want me to do?

DOCTOR: Cyrene's quarters. Clues. And I'd better get back to the Command Deck.

LOGAN: Oh ho, welcome back. I've just had a note to say that the entry from Cyrene has had to drop out due to ill health. Get well soon, Cyrene.

LOGAN [OC]: Well, only another few hours to go, and things are beginning to get interesting here.

DOCTOR: You're right there. Now then. Hello, is that you, Eleanor?

ELEANOR [OC]: Yes, John.

DOCTOR: Any progress on those tests?

ELEANOR [OC]: Not so far. The substance I took from Cyrene is very hard to identify.

DOCTOR: Keep trying, Eleanor. Commander out.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Ah, Professor Fassbinder.

(Door closes.)

IVOR: Commander. I've got the results of the sensor scan.

DOCTOR: Oh yes, let's have a look.

IVOR: Nothing very interesting, I'm afraid. Certainly nothing that could explain the explosion. Just a lot of rock.

DOCTOR: You didn't find any large objects? Anything unusual?

IVOR: No, it's all there in the report. Just a lot of atomised rock and a cloud of fuel cells. Still don't know what caused the er

DOCTOR: Never mind that. I mean, you did a full scan?

IVOR: Yes.

DOCTOR: And found no large objects? Nothing like a tall blue box with a light on top?

IVOR: With a light on top? No, no, nothing like that at all.

DOCTOR: Oh, no.

(Door opens.)

MEL: Hello? Anyone there? No? Good. Let's get sniffing for clues.

(Door closes.)

MEL: Er, dressing table. Nothing. Under the bed? No.

(Door opens.)

MEL: Oh, hello.

(Door closes.)

MEL: Er, I was just looking about. The Commander asked me to

(Gholos makes his noise.)

MEL: I'm sorry about what I said earlier. I'm sure the people of Gholos are great company. No, really, I didn't mean. What are you doing? No. No, keep back. Please, keep away, please. No! No, no.

LOOZLY: Gholos? Gholos, are you there?

MEL: Help!

LOOZLY: What's going on?

MEL: Get it away from me!

LOOZLY: Come away, Gholos. This Earth girl is harmless. Yes, I would very much like to know that too. What are you doing here?

MEL: What am I doing here? The Commander sent me to examine the room for clues. I didn't expect to be attacked by your, your fizzy friend.

LOOZLY: Yes, yes, I'll explain to her. Melanie, is it? Gholos was doing much the same.

MEL: Oh, I don't think so. Why did he attack?

LOOZLY: Gholos thought you were attacking him.

MEL: With what?

LOOZLY: You must understand. Gholos is naturally suspicious of humanoid females.

MEL: I'm hardly a harridan like Angvia.

LOOZLY: Gholos regrets the incident.

MEL: It doesn't sound like it. I think you ought to keep that thing under better control.

LOOZLY: I do not control Gholos, young lady. And that thing, as you so arrogantly put it, is part of the most advanced entity in the cosmos. Certainly more advanced than a mere human like you.

MEL: Or indeed you.

LOOZLY: That is to my eternal regret. Come, Gholos. Our apologies for this misunderstanding.

MEL: He sounds pretty steamed up.

LOOZLY: To be blunt, he is outraged at your slanders. He wants me to write a sternly worded letter complaining about your conduct.

(Door opens.)

NICKY: Mel? Oh, hello, Mel.

LOOZLY: Excuse us.

NICKY: Hey, watch it, Mister Loozly.

(Door closes.)

NICKY: What's he so steamed up about? You all right, Mel? Thought I could hear you, finished my interview. Thought we could have our chat, go for a swim? What's going on? You look a bit shaken up.

MEL: Nicky, that creature, it tried to kill me.

ELEANOR: But Ivor, what actually befell the Commander's shuttle?

IVOR: I just don't know, Eleanor. Perhaps some freak effect. Magnetic space lightning, cloud of invisible particles. Or some kind of new alien energy that just doesn't show up on our scanners. I just don't know.

ELEANOR: Commander, you look troubled.

DOCTOR: I'm fine, really.

ELEANOR: The object you lost, it was of sentimental value?

DOCTOR: Irreplaceable.

ELEANOR: I'm sorry. If you ever need to talk, the door to my quarters is always open, John.

DOCTOR: Er, oh, thank you.

ELEANOR: I was able to be of great personal comfort to Commander Keel.

DOCTOR: Oh, yes, I'll bear that in mind.

STRINDBERG: Commander?

DOCTOR: What is it, Lieutenant Strindberg?

STRINDBERG: I'm picking up alarming reports on the space news channels.

DOCTOR: Oh, switch it on. I mean, patch them through.

STRINDBERG: Aye, sir.

REPORTER [OC]: Terrorist ships have broken through the security cordon, the so-called ring of iron around Achilles Four, and all fortified SSTs. The Achilles Four interceptors engaged with the first wave with limited success, but now the second wave of fighters have struck from delta sector.

ANCHORMAN [OC]: And what can you see from where you're standing, Brian?

REPORTER [OC]: It's just

ELEANOR: Achilles Four is under attack.

DOCTOR: I think we've heard enough, Lieutenant.

IVOR: This is terrible. That station was brand new. It was supposed to be impregnable.

DOCTOR: Nothing's impregnable if you have the right equipment. Or the right information.

ELEANOR: This was the last best hope for peace between Gholos and Angvia.

DOCTOR: Yes, if the Achilles Four conference fails, war rages on forever.

ELEANOR: If only we could do something. Oh, I feel so helpless.

DOCTOR: We can do something.

IVOR: What?

DOCTOR: Our bit. We keep our peckers up, we put our shoulders to the wheel, our noses to the grindstone, our backs to the trough and our elbows in the grease, to make sure this Intergalactic Song Contest is the best the universe has ever seen, or will ever see. We show the warmakers that music can bring harmony.

MEL: Let's do the show right here, in the barn.

DOCTOR: Don't be so cynical, Mel.

LOGAN: And it appears Achilles Four has been attacked by Angvian separatists. Oh dear. You have to ask yourself, what's going through the minds of these people? Well, I suppose it's back to the contest. Something to cheer us all up. Or not. The arena's just beginning to fill up. Let me just describe the arena to you. The seating holds forty thousand specially invited audience members. What an honour to be invited, eh? And there they are, enjoying the hospitality, staggering back to their seats. There are two hundred thousand mini-crystal hovercams covering every angle of the performance space, beaming every detail of each song to a quinquillion homes across the universe. Ah yes, you can bet it's going to be an unforgettable night.

MEL: What do you mean, they can't find the Tardis?

DOCTOR: It's not showing up on their scans, so the Professor says.

MEL: Perhaps it's floated off somewhere.

DOCTOR: Impossible.

MEL: Or it really did get blown up.

DOCTOR: Equally impossible. The Tardis is impregnable. Oh.

MEL: What?

DOCTOR: Nothing. But the Tardis is indestructible, ergo, it must be out there.

MEL: Ergo their scanners are playing up. Or

DOCTOR: Ergo?

MEL: The Professor is lying. You know, I thought there was something odd about him.

DOCTOR: There's something odd about plenty of people. It doesn't make them liars. But it certainly adds to the mystery.

MEL: And I've got yet another piece of that jigsaw.

DOCTOR: Yes?

MEL: Gholos attacked me in Cyrene's room. Loozly called it off, and it said it was just looking for clues same as me, but it was glowing bright red and looked furious.

DOCTOR: Oh, Mel, are you all right?

MEL: Ah, you know me, Doctor. Takes more than a stropo alien to shake me up. How would I cope with you otherwise? I reckon Professor Fassbinder and Gholos are in this together. He blew up the shuttle, and Gholos killed Cyrene, and tried to kill me to cover up the evidence.

DOCTOR: Brilliant.

MEL: What?

DOCTOR: An astonishing display.

MEL: Really?

DOCTOR: Of leaping to hasty conclusions. You've no evidence to support your theory.

MEL: I suppose not. But have you got any evidence to disprove it?

DOCTOR: Not yet. I suggest we keep our eyes peeled, our ears pricked and our other sensory appendages primed.

MEL: I have been.

DOCTOR: Really? Oh, you've already missed something important.

MEL: What?

DOCTOR: When we discovered Cyrene

MEL: What?

DOCTOR: Ah.

MEL: Oh no, Doctor, spill the beans.

DOCTOR: Unlike you, Mel, I won't spill my beans until I know how many of them make five.

MEL: Eh?

DOCTOR: Come in!

(Door opens.)

STRINDBERG: Excuse me, Commander. Sorry to disturb you in your ready room, but your presence is requested in the contestant's lounge. There's some kind of disturbance.

MEL: No prizes for guessing who that it.

ANGVIA: Those terrorists are not affiliated to the Angvian State. They have no connection with the Angvian State. They do not represent the species of the Angvian State.

LOOZLY: This is a deliberate attempt to destroy the peace process, to besmirch the good name of Gholos by provoking a walk-out by the Gholos delegation. A flagrant breach of trust by the Angvian delegation.

GERI: Stop, stop, just stop it! This contest is designed to create an atmosphere of harmony between all races. It is not political.

LOOZLY: At this time, every act is a political act.

GERI: These people are terrorists. They want to provoke war and aggression between us. If we argue we will be giving them exactly what they want. We must strive to rise above their provocation.

DOCTOR: I couldn't have put it better myself.

NICKY: Hi, Mel. That's the Commander?

DOCTOR: And you must be Nicky Newman?

NICKY: You don't know me either? Oh, fantastic.

DOCTOR: Now, Mister Loozly. Melanie has explained what happened just now.

MEL: Gholos attacked me, that's what.

LOOZLY: He did no such thing.

DOCTOR: And we are happy to accept your apologies.

ANGVIA: I am not

DOCTOR: We are all happy to accept your apologies!

NICKY: I wish it would stop fizzing like that. It's making me feel ill.

LOOZLY: Gholos is naturally anxious. First the murder of Cyrene, now the attack on Achilles Four. The contest should be called off.

GERI: That is out of the question. Please, try to remain calm.

DOCTOR: Yes. It's time for everyone to stop getting so red in the face. Including you, Gholos.

LOOZLY: Gholos only turns this colour in a time of extreme crisis.

DOCTOR: Crisis? What crisis? Please, Gholos, you are safe. And while I command Dark Space Eight, you will come to no harm. I'm going to assign er security patrols to all area, and I'll put the station on full alert. But

the contest is most definitely going ahead. Ah, Eleanor.

ELEANOR: Commander. I've got the results of the tests on Cyrene's body.

ANGVIA: Now we will know the truth, the blue sting of Gholos.

ELEANOR: The results are inconclusive. Cyrene died from a massive internal haemorrhage, a sudden and tremendous shock to the neuro-cortex the brain.

ANGVIA: Let me see those scans.

ELEANOR: It's impossible to tell what caused that shock.

LOOZLY: What about the marks on the skin?

ELEANOR: There's no way of telling what could have the scarring on the tissue, or whether it's even connected to the neural spasm.

MEL: Right. So everybody can just calm down and focus on the contest.

GERI: Hear, hear.

LOOZLY: This is typical human behaviour, burying your heads in the sand. Come, Gholos. (leaves)

ANGVIA: You do well, Commander. Very well. Now, I trust you will respect the customs of my people and, before the contest, you will dine with me.

DOCTOR: Er, naturally.

ANGVIA: Good. I will see you in the dining sphere at 1800 hours.

DOCTOR: It will be a pleasure.

ANGVIA: I'm sure it will. (leaves)

NICKY: Phew. I don't envy you, Commander.

GERI: It is an Angvian tradition to take a meal with the chief of the village they are visiting. I hope you don't mind, Commander?

DOCTOR: Not at all. I'm feeling rather peckish. Now then. Ah. Oh, isn't it quiet all of a sudden. Perhaps it's a good time for us all to have a rest.

NICKY: Come on in, Mel, the water's lovely.

(Splash.)

MEL: It's freezing!

NICKY: Yeah, I was lying. The heating must have packed up like everything else on this station.

MEL: The way the Professor and Eleanor talk, you'd think the place was a hot-bed of adventure.

NICKY: Once, maybe. I mean, my mum was really made up that I was coming to Dark Space Eight, because it used to be in the news all the time. You know, invasions foiled, all that bit. Look, are you coming in or not?

MEL: Okay, okay, here goes. (splash) Ah! It's even colder in here than I

NICKY: Don't be such a baby.

MEL: (shivering) Oh, don't worry about me. I seem to spend my whole life being wet and cold. Er, being a pilot, I mean.

NICKY: Right. So how did you get into that, then?

MEL: Oh, you know, the usual way. I mean, it's nowhere near as exciting as what you do.

NICKY: Don't you believe it. Everybody thinks that. All I ever get is, aren't you lucky. Well, when they can actually manage to speak to me instead of just staring and dribbling.

MEL: That's the price of fame, I suppose.

NICKY: Yeah. But everybody thinks they know me, and everybody has an opinion about me. Can you imagine what that's like? I haven't even met most of them. But even when I do, people think I've said too much, or I haven't said enough, or I'm being over-friendly, or not friendly enough, or that I'm too aloof, or that I'm trying too hard to be down to earth. Honestly, Mel, it drives me mad. I was sitting on that shuttle here, all the flight crew muttering about me, screaming fans floating over my shoulder, feeling like death, my head thumping.

MEL: Well, I suppose you

NICKY: It was only that Mister Loozly who was polite enough to ask me how I was. And that's only because he's been living in candyfloss land for years. I had to cadge a headache pill off him because I couldn't face another round of giggling from the stewardess. And I mean, have you any idea how sick I feel right now, knowing I've got to go on in front of God knows how many billion people and sing? Don't get me started on how the media portray me, because. Oh God. Look, I'm sorry. Listen to me. Poor little rich boy.

MEL: So why don't you give it up? You could walk away, couldn't you? Go home.

NICKY: Are you mad? My manager would kill me. And my mum. And as for the fans.

MEL: But you can't live your life for other people.

TANNOY: Would Mister White please come to the media-sphere. (repeats under)

NICKY: Oh God, not again.

MEL: Hmm?

NICKY: Mister White. That's me. It's what they call me so that people won't follow me about, or send a paparazzi-cam after me. Must be another fan club chat or something. Christ, I'm sick of this.

(Gets out of pool.)

MEL: Well, take my advice then, and

NICKY: You just don't get it, do you? Don't even try to understand cos you can't. I've got to go. Later.

MEL: Hey, I was only trying to help. What's got into him?

LOGAN: Well, the band's tuning up, the guests are supping up, and the acts are giving up. Any ideas of doing a runner, that is. As for me, well, I'm keeping myself busy whilst we wait for tonight's festivities to kick off. Now, I get a lot of letters, surprising though that may seem, and some of them even ask me sensible questions. Some of the ones I can read, that is. Ha, ha. Now, some of you have been wondering how I can comment on the songs when I can't even say the names of half of them. Good question, there. Well, this year I've got something to beat my critics with, and it isn't a stick this time.

LOGAN [OC]: No, old Logan isn't quite as stupid as he seems, as I've been working on my own little translator unit for the last couple of months. And if the lure of the hospitality bar isn't too great, I'm hoping to have it ready in time for the contest. That way, I can give 'em all a fair chance before I stamp all over them. (laughs) Anyways, I'll hand you over now to Burt Swanley and the Debonaires, who thought they might inflict a little bit of real music on you all before we get down to business. This is Logan singing off for now. (Someone has been sighing and tutting through that speech.)

MEL: Hello? Oh, Mister Loozly. Is your er friend not about?

LOOZLY: Gholos is not my friend. Don't be ridiculous. He's resting in his cabin. With this device, he can summon me when required, and I can monitor his vital signs. Life away from the gestalt is trying for him. Satisfied?

MEL: Right. Good. I've just had a swim. It's good for the heart, you know. Especially in water that cold.

LOOZLY: How fascinating.

MEL: Don't they have swimming pools on Gholos's planet?

LOOZLY: The world of Gholos is in many ways, I am sure, beyond your comprehension, young lady.

MEL: I've been to a lot of strange places.

LOOZLY: You talk a lot too.

MEL: It's called being sociable.

LOOZLY: Oh, forgive me. I'm not used to other humans.

DOCTOR: I think you'll find they're called people.

MEL: Hello, Commander.

DOCTOR: You must have some human friends, Mister Loozly?

LOOZLY: I worked in Earth Security for several years. I still keep in touch with some of the people there, I suppose. That's how I first came to visit Gholos, on a diplomatic mission some oh, twenty years ago now.

DOCTOR: I hear it's a bit misty.

LOOZLY: Misty?

DOCTOR: Yes.

LOOZLY: Gholos is oneness, a myriad of shifting colours, some you wouldn't even recognise. The stream of thought that surrounds the gestalt is serene, beautiful. Beings of pure mental energy, creatures of thought, souls, you might say. Can you imagine what that feels like? Not to have to drag this carcass with its needs, its hunger, its incessant demands around with you.

MEL: I quite like my carcass, actually

LOOZLY: (laughs) I didn't really think you'd understand, but, Melanie, I really am happy there.

DOCTOR: As long as you're happy, Mister Loozly. Mel, we must get back to the Command Deck, and keep an eye on that space battle.

MEL: I'll be up in a minute.

(The Doctor leaves.)

MEL: So, tell me more about what you do when you're with the gestalt.

LOOZLY: Well, if you're really interested about the er

ANCHORMAN [OC]: We've been hearing rumours all afternoon, Brian, so is there anything you can tell us at this stage?

REPORTER [OC]: Er, well, there has been no official statement as yet, but just a few moments ago I saw the last of the terrorist ships make hyperjump, with the fleet in hot pursuit. So, as far as any of us can tell, the attack on Achilles Four is now over..

ANCHORMAN [OC]: So the conference seems to be safe.

REPORTER [OC]: That's certainly the feeling here, Michael, and given the casualties the attackers suffered, I think it's safe to say that a second attack is unlikely

ANCHORMAN [OC]: There's been a lot said here about the pincer attack the terrorist ships adopted. Can you tell us any more about that?

REPORTER [OC]: Er, well, er, certainly from where I was sitting their tactics seemed very weak

DOCTOR: I think weak might be something of an understatement.

STRINDBERG: Commander?

DOCTOR: Hmm? Oh, nothing, Lieutenant. Nothing. Just talking to myself. Terrible habit of mine. Anyway, it

looks like the Peace Conference had a lucky escape.

STRINDBERG: It's lucky for us all.

DOCTOR: Indeed, indeed. I wonder if you might do me a favour, Lieutenant, and pop across the way to tell Eleanor. I know how worried she is.

STRINDBERG: Of course, sir. Right away.

(Door opens.)

MEL: Oh, sorry.

STRINDBERG: After you, Miss. Please excuse me.

(Door closes.)

DOCTOR: Ah, Pilot Mel. Been having fun?

MEL: I actually had quite a nice chat with our Mister Loozly.

DOCTOR: Really?

MEL: Mmm. He isn't half as fierce away from that Gholos thing. I just don't think he's very good with humans.

DOCTOR: (laughs) And I've no doubt he received the full Melanie Bush course in people skills.

MEL: Gratis and for nothing. So what have you been up to whilst oh. What was that?

DOCTOR: Over there, under the door. It's a note.

(Door opens.)

MEL: Nobody around. Hello? Who's there? Hello?

DOCTOR: Curiouser and curiouser.

(Door closes.)

MEL: What's it say?

DOCTOR: Commander. Beware the pits of Angvia.

MEL: No name?

DOCTOR: Nothing.

MEL: The pits of Angvia? What's that supposed to mean?

DOCTOR: Pits? I don't remember there being any pits on Angvia. Very big trees, as I recall, but no pits. And anyway, the planet's halfway across space from here.

MEL: Or maybe it's meant to throw us. You know, send us off on a wild goose chase.

DOCTOR: But it's meaningless. I mean, if you wanted to befuddle someone, you'd make up something more cryptic, less specific.

MEL: Well, whoever left it obviously wants to implicate our friendly neighbourhood Valkyrie in this mess. I mean, it could have been Lieutenant Strindberg. He was close by, and he

DOCTOR: Oh, Mel.

MEL: Sorry. But someone left it. Hey. Perhaps it was the Professor. I mean, we don't know what sort of devices he could have hidden in here. Maybe he heard us talking earlier and decided to shift the blame.

DOCTOR: Maybe, maybe not. Maybe it was Eleanor, or Loozly, or Nicky, or Geri, or old Mister Jenkins the Janitor. I could go on all afternoon and it still wouldn't get us anywhere. The only people we can rule out are you and me. Unless there's something you're not telling me?

MEL: Oh, very funny. Well, I still think it's a good theory. And I'm going to go have a nose round the Professor's lab. If nothing else, it might mean we can cross off a suspect.

DOCTOR: Professor Fassbinder, with the lead piping in the lab. Oh, all right then. But be careful.

MEL: I'm not the one who needs to be careful. You've got a date with Angvia.

ELEANOR: There you are, Mister Newman. These drugs should help with your headache and nausea.

NICKY: I don't like the look of them. What are they?

ELEANOR: They're an extract of Malvolian fungoid.

NICKY: Wish I hadn't asked.

ELEANOR: Have you taken any other drugs in the last twenty four hours?

NICKY: I had an aspirin on the shuttle.

ELEANOR: Well, these shouldn't react adversely with that.

NICKY: They smell funny. Mel? Hey, Mel?

MEL: Oh, it's you. What do you want? I'm busy.

NICKY: Look, I'm sorry we had that little row, or spat, or whatever it was.

MEL: I wasn't aware that we'd had a row. As I recall, I was trying to be helpful and you were shouting at me.

NICKY: Oh. Yeah. Sorry. Friends?

MEL: Yes, okay. I could do with some help.

ELEANOR: Oh, really? With what, exactly?

MEL: Oh, never mind. It's nothing important. Come on, Nicky.

NICKY: Yeah, coming. Thanks for the pills, Doc.

ELEANOR: What? Oh, yes, yes. Mmm.

(Restaurant chatter and clinking of glasses.)

DOCTOR: Yes, if I could just squeeze past?



ANGVIA: Ah, Commander. I was beginning to fear you were not coming.  
DOCTOR: Oh, I never break a date.  
ANGVIA: And I have never been, how do you say on Earth, stood down? Do you wish to see the menu?  
DOCTOR: Oh, thank you.  
ROBOT WAITER: Good evening, sir, madam. May I take your order?  
DOCTOR: Oh yes. Yes, I'll have a Pamperanian fritters to start with.  
ANGVIA: I will not have a starter. We of Angvia do not have starters. I'm interested only in the main course.  
DOCTOR: Oh. In which case then  
ANGVIA: Rump of Argelian Starbison, rare.  
DOCTOR: Er, twice, please.  
ROBOT WAITER: Very good, sir, madam.  
DOCTOR: Well, er  
ANGVIA: Well.  
DOCTOR: Well, here we are.  
ANGVIA: Yes. We are here.  
DOCTOR: Here we are, then.  
ANGVIA: Yes.  
DOCTOR: We're agreed on that, anyway. My old philosopher friend Descartes could never decide if he was here or not. Played havoc when it came to working out the bill.  
ANGVIA: (laughs hysterically) Oh, Commander. Oh, you are so, so witty! My, but it's warm in here. I'll just remove my helmet.  
(Clunk.)  
DOCTOR: Ooo, your hair.  
ANGVIA: What of it?  
DOCTOR: Well, it's very lovely. I mean, it's very long.  
ANGVIA: Do Earth women also have lovely hair?  
DOCTOR: Er, yes, yes, I suppose so. I've never really thought about it. Strange. So, your people have been at war with Gholos for a very long time. How did it all get started, anyway? I'm rather vague on the details.  
ANGVIA: It's all ancient history. It does not matter tonight.  
DOCTOR: All these border incursions seem to be  
ANGVIA: Politics. Ah, no, it is a bore. I know little of such matters. We learn the worst of the crimes by rote at the seminar, but I was always an entertainer in my heart and soul.  
DOCTOR: Yes. Er, nice view.  
ANGVIA: The wall?  
DOCTOR: Well, it's quite a nice wall.  
ANGVIA: No, it is not.  
DOCTOR: I don't suppose it is.  
ANGVIA: Forgive me, Commander. I must be blunt with you.  
DOCTOR: Be as blunt as you like.  
ANGVIA: Ever since we met, I have felt something inside me, stirring.  
DOCTOR: You should go to the sickbay.  
ANGVIA: Sickbay? Ha. Doctors cannot cure love.  
DOCTOR: Love?  
ANGVIA: You act as if you've never heard the word before.  
DOCTOR: Well, I've heard of it, but perhaps you're having a bit of a difficulty with our language.  
ANGVIA: No. I said love. I mean love.  
DOCTOR: Er, what sort of love do you mean? Professional admiration? Platonic affection? Quite liking someone in a distant abstract sort of way?  
ANGVIA: I am talking of mad passionate love! Embraces under the stars. On Angvia we women choose our mates.  
DOCTOR: Sort of like a ladies' excuse-me kind of thing.  
ANGVIA: I know nothing of this ladies' excuse-me. All I know is what my heart tells me. I look into your eyes and I see boiling masculine virility under the flimsy lid of your beauty.  
DOCTOR: Do you?  
ANGVIA: Come here!  
DOCTOR: Argh!  
ANGVIA: Rest your head on my bosom. You hear my heart pounding?  
DOCTOR: (muffled) Mmph.  
ANGVIA: Feel it?  
DOCTOR: (muffled) Yes. It's actually rather comfortable.  
ANGVIA: Now, do you feel love?  
DOCTOR: What? I. Yes. Yes, strangely enough, I think I'm beginning to

NICKY: So why are we looking for the Professor?  
MEL: Shh. We're not. We're just going for a little nose round his lab.  
NICKY: But, won't he mind?  
MEL: If we're careful, he'll never know. Professor? Professor Fassbinder, are you there? Great. It's lucky he never seems to be around. Come on, and be careful.  
NICKY: We shouldn't be doing this, Mel. The tabloids'll have a field day if I get wrapped up in, well, I don't know, breaking and entering or whatever it is we're doing.  
MEL: All the more reason to shut up and start looking around.  
NICKY: What for?  
MEL: I don't know. Clues. Anything suspicious. This is a murder investigation, remember. Look for something murderous.  
NICKY: All right, all right. (beeps) Whoa!  
MEL: Shh!  
NICKY: Sorry. What was that?  
(Door opens.)  
MEL: Hmm?  
NICKY: Someone's coming.  
MEL: What? You're right. Quick, behind this thing.  
(Door closes. Whispering.)  
NICKY: Who is it? Can you see?  
MEL: I don't recognise him.  
NICKY: Let me see. It's Logan, the commentator. He interviewed me once.  
MEL: You don't suppose he's mixed up in all this?  
NICKY: Him? No, he can't be.  
LOGAN: Who's there? Who, who, who  
MEL: He's found us. I'd better come clean. (normal) Mister Logan? Er, hello. My name's Mel. I'm here with Nicky Newman.  
NICKY: Hi.  
MEL: We were just waiting for Professor Fassbinder to come back and er  
(Logan groans.)  
MEL: Are you all right? What's wrong?  
NICKY: Oh no. Oh no, is that  
MEL: Oh, Mister Logan? Mister Logan?  
LOGAN: This is Logan, signing off.  
MEL: Nicky, at the risk of making a habit out of this kind of thing, he's dead. He's been stabbed in the back!

### [Part Three]

DOCTOR: You are a very beautiful woman.  
ANGVIA: And you, Commander, are such a handsome man. The way your hair curls under your hat, those deep grey eyes, so mysterious.  
DOCTOR: It's been a very, very long time since I felt anything like this, and so strongly. Oh, Angvia, how could I have been so blind. Wherever we go in the universe, one thing is constant. Hoards of hairy aliens descend in their battle cruisers, men in plastic overalls hurry down corridors, the red shift gobbles up planets at the edge of Time, but in all those places, love is real.  
ANGVIA: Oh, Commander, kiss me!  
DOCTOR: Love. Oh Angvia, what have I been doing all these centuries? I've wasted so much time fighting monsters when I should have been tasting life's great sweetener, amour.  
ANGVIA: Yes, all right, I get where you're coming from. Now, kiss me!  
STRINDBERG [OC]: Commander Ballard, please report urgently to Command deck.  
DOCTOR: No, no, not now, not now.  
ANGVIA: Don't answer, Commander, my love.  
STRINDBERG [OC]: Please report urgently to Command deck.  
DOCTOR: Yes, I'll ignore it.  
ANGVIA: Fall into my arms.  
STRINDBERG [OC]: Commander Ballard, please report urgently to Command deck.  
ANGVIA: No, don't listen to it. Tonight Dark Space Eight can look after itself. This night was made for love  
DOCTOR: I, I can't. Angvia, I must go. The universe can't be trusted to itself.  
ANGVIA: The universe can wait. I am a woman!  
DOCTOR: I'm sorry, my love, but it will only be for a short while, until I've solved this invasion or power-mad scheme or whatever it is today.  
ANGVIA: Then hurry. You have lit the flame and only you can put it out.  
DOCTOR: I will return soon.

ANGVIA: Oh, my little man.

ELEANOR: Dark Space Eight status report, day 4,816 of operation. Chief Medic Eleanor Harcourt reporting. The unexpected death of the Earth commentator Logan has created an unsettling atmosphere aboard the station, and has even cast doubt on the continuation of the Intergalactic Song Contest. We can only hope that the results of my post mortem examination will quell the tide of rising anxiety which threatens to engulf our normally happy community. On a more personal note, my concern is also growing for the welfare of Commander Ballard, whose behaviour seems to become ever stranger as his acquaintance with Queen Angvia grows more familiar. It pains me to say that I can foresee the day when it may be my duty to rescue the Commander from the unwanted attentions of that, that Queen Angvia. In the meantime, I must report to sickbay to examine the body of the unfortunate commentator, Logan. Harcourt out.

MEL: But who could have wanted to kill the commentator? And where's Professor Fassbinder? What's going on in Dark Space Eight, Doc, er Commander. Commander?

DOCTOR: (dreamily) Huh? Oh, sorry, Mel. I was just, er, pondering the mystery.

NICKY: Surely now you're going to stop the contest.

DOCTOR: Well, it is an option, I suppose.

GERI: Commander? Are you all right?

DOCTOR: Oh, I'm fine. Fine.

MEL: Well, come on, then.

DOCTOR: Come on where?

MEL: What do you think?

GERI: The contest is imminent, Commander.

MEL: All the more reason to cancel it.

NICKY: Mel's right. We can't go on.

MEL: Your stage fright's by the by. We can't ignore another murder.

NICKY: Do you think that's why I want the contest pulled? You must think a lot of me.

(Door opens and closes.)

LOOZLY: Ah, Commander.

GERI: Oh dear, every time that door opens I pray it's not going to be him.

LOOZLY: I've heard about the murder.

DOCTOR: Ah, I suppose you want the contest cancelled.

LOOZLY: Certainly not.

GERI: Really, Mister Loozly? You surprise me.

LOOZLY: I have no opinion of my own. I merely relay Gholos's thoughts.

NICKY: So all that crackling means the opposite of what it said before? Sounds just the same to me.

LOOZLY: Gholos considers that it is now far too late to cancel the contest. The eyes of billions of beings across the universe are trained here, on Dark Space Eight. The evening's presentation has already begun.

To pull out this late would give the murderer, whoever it may be, exactly what she wants.

MEL: By she, I presume you mean Angvia?

DOCTOR: Impossible. I was with Queen Angvia when Logan was murdered.

LOOZLY: Oh, really. How very convenient. The perfect alibi.

(Door opens and closes.)

ELEANOR: John, I've examined the body of the commentator.

DOCTOR: Oh. And?

MEL: Come on, Commander. Show some interest.

ELEANOR: He was stabbed.

NICKY: I could have told you that.

ELEANOR: There were no fingerprints on the vibro-knife.

GERI: Did you carry out a psycho-genetic test?

ELEANOR: Of course, Ambassador. The results were

GERI: Don't tell me. Negative.

NICKY: Great. Come on, Commander, the final decision's up to you. We've got just under an hour till the contest begins. Are you going to cancel it?

DOCTOR: Well, no. No, no, on reflection

GERI: Excellent. A wise choice, Commander. I shall tell the team in the concert hall to proceed as planned. Mister Loozly, Gholos, Mister Newman, I suggest you prepare for your performances.

LOOZLY: Indeed. Come, Gholos.

NICKY: I just don't think I can do it, Mel. My stomach's getting worse.

MEL: Get Doctor Harcourt to check you out.

NICKY: No ta. She gave me these horrible pills last time. Anyway, doctor's scare me.

MEL: Is there anything that doesn't? Go back to your cabin and try to get some rest before you go on. I'll see you later.

NICKY: Okay. Thanks for the sympathy.

MEL: If you want a normal friendship, you'd better learn the rules.

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: That was rather harsh, Mel.

MEL: You haven't seen the half of it. Where can we talk privately? Ah, Commander's ready room. Come on, you.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Mel, whatever's the matter?

MEL: You tell me.

(Door closes.)

MEL: What's wrong with you?

DOCTOR: Nothing.

MEL: I've never seen you like this before. You seem distracted, like the murders don't matter.

DOCTOR: Of course they matter.

MEL: Out there you looked like you were drifting off, like your mind was somewhere else.

DOCTOR: Did I?

MEL: You're doing it again.

DOCTOR: Am I?

MEL: What's got into you? I expect a certain amount of eccentricity, but never disinterest.

DOCTOR: Oh Mel, now you come to mention it, I do feel a little strange.

MEL: Hold on. Did anything happen while you were with Angvia?

DOCTOR: What do you mean by that?

MEL: I just wondered if she said or did anything that gave you pause for thought. Doctor, what's wrong?

DOCTOR: Mel, you know me, the things I always do, the things I never do.

MEL: Of course.

DOCTOR: The things I always do?

MEL: Charge round the universe setting wrongs to right, generally.

DOCTOR: And never?

MEL: Well, you're never nasty or deliberately cruel.

DOCTOR: And?

MEL: And you never. Well, you never. No!

DOCTOR: For a horrible moment back there, Mel, yes. Or nearly.

MEL: With Angvia?

DOCTOR: Yes.

MEL: I must say, after, well, after several hundred years of celibacy, that's a pretty odd place to start up again.

DOCTOR: There's something wrong here, Mel. Something very wrong indeed. I've got to pull myself together. There are lives at stake. Mind on the job and all that.

MEL: I think you ought to get your mind off the job. It sounds like you've been having some sort of mid-regeneration crisis. Oh, we'll sort that out later.

DOCTOR: Er, yes, hmm. So. So what did the Professor say when you went to see him in the lab?

MEL: I was trying to tell you. He was nowhere to be found.

DOCTOR: Oh, Mel!

MEL: I did have a man bleeding on me at the time.

DOCTOR: Yes, and that's another thing. I mean, what did our murderer have to gain by killing the commentator?

MEL: It seems pretty obvious. A high profile target. One of the most famous people here, according to Nicky.

DOCTOR: On the surface, yes. I'm just trying to remember what he was (lightbulb) Ah yes. Yes.

MEL: Oh, come on, Doctor. Spit it out.

DOCTOR: Apply your elephantine memory, Mel, and I'm sure you'll draw the same conclusions as this love-struck old fool.

MEL: Oh, you're back to your old self, all right. The only conclusion I've drawn is that the Prof's done a runner.

DOCTOR: Well, see if you can find him, then.

MEL: So you *do* think he's behind it. At last.

DOCTOR: No comment.

MEL: Oh, I give up. Doctor, do you know what happened to Sherlock Holmes in the end?

DOCTOR: What?

MEL: Watson bashed him over the head with his own violin for being so aggravating. I'm off to find the Professor.

(Tapping microphone.)

STRINDBERG: Is this on? Oh. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Sven Strindberg, and I am

to be your commentator for this evening's contest due to the er unavailability of your regularly scheduled host. Get well soon, Mister Logan. And as the hall fills with er people who want to er see this contest, here, this evening, in the er, hall. Oh dear.

DOCTOR: Door's open.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Ah. Eleanor.

ELEANOR: John. I wondered if you needed anything.

DOCTOR: Oh. No thank you. Just pondering.

ELEANOR: Strange. Paul, Commander Keel, used to sit just there, gazing into the infinity of space.

DOCTOR: Did it help him?

ELEANOR: Oh yes. I remember when Dark Space Eight had been stricken with the Altairian plague.

Everybody's usual inhibitions went flying out the window. Every passionate thought, every repressed instinct

DOCTOR: And how did he solve the problem?

ELEANOR: He reversed the station's air-conditioning system. After a while, anyway.

DOCTOR: If only this problem could be solved so easily.

ELEANOR: You're still no nearer to the solution, John?

DOCTOR: Tell me, Doctor Harcourt. What do you think of Professor Fassbinder?

ELEANOR: I trust Ivor with my life. We've been through so much together. I remember when a being called Zeon appeared out of space, freezing us all and claiming to be God

DOCTOR: Yes, yes. But he's a trustworthy character?

ELEANOR: And a great scientist.

(Knocking on door.)

ANGVIA: Oh, Commander. I see you are busy.

DOCTOR: Oh, no, no, your Graciousness. Please come in.

ANGVIA: Are you sure?

ELEANOR: Shouldn't you be getting ready for the contest, Queen Angvia?

ANGVIA: Yes, of course. I just wanted a few words with the Commander.

ELEANOR: I'll attend to my other duties, then.

(Door closes.)

ANGVIA: She is very lonely woman, the doctor.

DOCTOR: You think so?

ANGVIA: There is some hidden sadness behind her eyes. I sense it. We of Angvia have sharp instincts. Just as my instincts told me that you, Commander, are a very passionate man.

DOCTOR: Ah. Now, er, Queen Angvia, we really must have a chat about that, and you're due on the stage very soon. Oh please, I'd rather you didn't do that. Oh, now really.

ANGVIA: We have time enough for love, Commander.

DOCTOR: We really don't.

ANGVIA: We have.

DOCTOR: We haven't.

ANGVIA: Come to me.

DOCTOR: No. I must insist.

ANGVIA: Are you telling me to leave?

DOCTOR: No. Yes! Yes, yes, please. I'm telling you to leave.

ANGVIA: No. The shame of it.

DOCTOR: Well, nobody else knows about er you know, us.

ANGVIA: (crying) That is not the point. I'm the fourteenth Queen of the house of Silsitor. To be rejected by a mere male is shame eternal.

DOCTOR: Well, I'm just not like the other boys.

ANGVIA: You're not like any other men. You are a great mystery. I go to sing. To sing away my tears.

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: This is most peculiar. Why am I behaving like this? Come on, Doctor, think!

MEL: Mel to Commander. Come in, Commander. Oh, how does this thing work?

NICKY: You press the middle bit.

MEL: Oh, Nicky. You scared me.

NICKY: Sorry, Mel. Actually, I really am sorry. I've been acting like an idiot. I bought you this to say, well, sorry.

MEL: Oh Nicky, it's lovely. I didn't know roses grew in space.

NICKY: No, there's a gift shop on level th... oh, teasing me, yes?

MEL: 'Fraid so. It's very sweet of you. Listen to me, Nicky Newman. You have to learn to loosen up a bit. You can't live your lift for a group of people you don't even know. Look what it's doing to you.

NICKY: I know, I know. After this is over, I'll sort something out. Promise. When it's over. God, I can hardly

even bear to think of what I've

MEL: Don't, then. Come and help me. I'm trying to find Professor Fassbinder, and I'm not having much luck. With that or with this stupid communicator thing.

NICKY: Have you tried in the main hall? Maybe he's helping them out with, I don't know, science things.

MEL: Hmm, that must be the only place I haven't tried. Come on.

(General hubbub of voices.)

STRINDBERG [OC]: So, yes, not long to go now. Ah, even less time now. (laughs) Oh.

NICKY: I'd rather not go in.

MEL: Afraid of being recognised? Just put a bag on your head.

NICKY: Okay, sorry. I'm being unreasonable again, aren't I?

MEL: A smidge. It's dark back here. Nobody's going to... Nicky, over there.

NICKY: Where? What?

MEL: Right at the back of the auditorium. Surely that's

NICKY: The Professor.

MEL: The elusive Professor. At last. Now we'll get to the truth.

MEL: Professor Fassbinder, I know everything. The game's up. It's time for you to confess.

NICKY: Mel.

MEL: You've been trying to stop the contest for some reason, and you deliberately falsified the test on our shuttle, and you killed the commentator.

NICKY: Mel, I think he's dead.

IVOR: I oh er ring of satellites. Ring of satellites.

MEL: No, he isn't. But we've got to get him to Doctor Harcourt, and fast.

ELEANOR: Young lady, there is no question of Professor Fassbinder neglecting his duties.

MEL: Look at him. He must have been taking something.

NICKY: The hassle of the contest must have got to him. You see a lot of it in this business.

MEL: More likely he's been trying to assuage the guilt, to wash away the stain of murder.

DOCTOR: Now, now, Mel. Thank you for calling me, Eleanor. Now what exactly is wrong with the Professor?

ELEANOR: John, I just don't know. I'll have to carry out a full range of tests.

DOCTOR: Wait a moment. Professor? Listen. It's the Commander.

IVOR: Somebody. Somebody had

DOCTOR: Somebody had the er what?

IVOR: It's the

NICKY: He's pointing to his throat.

DOCTOR: Let's see. Loosen his collar.

MEL: Oh no.

ELEANOR: John, what is it?

DOCTOR: You're the doctor.

NICKY: That mark on his neck, is it poison?

DOCTOR: Almost certainly.

MEL: So I was wrong. Far from being the murderer, he's victim number five. Er, three.

ELEANOR: There may still be a chance.

DOCTOR: I don't think so, Eleanor. I'm sorry.

ELEANOR: Oh, Ivor, try to tell us what happened? Who did this to you?

IVOR: Someone must have heard the

MEL: Heard what?

ELEANOR: Ivor, remember when you and I and Commander Keel were accidentally transported back through Time and space to mediaeval Wales? You didn't give up then, and you mustn't give up now.

IVOR: Sorry, Eleanor. Oh, Eleanor, I wish I could have told you and Paul the truth.

ELEANOR: I don't understand.

DOCTOR: I think I do. Professor, I know your secret.

MEL: He is the murderer.

DOCTOR: Hush, Mel.

MEL: Sorry.

DOCTOR: Tell them, Professor.

IVOR: Don't call me that.

ELEANOR: What? I don't understand.

IVOR: Oh, Eleanor, all these years, whenever you or Paul asked me what's that, or how do we get through this black hole, or whatever, I just used to say the first thing that came into my head. A cloud of neutrino charged ions, or we must invert the stations gravitic stabilisers, or stick a ring of satellites around the moon. It was all rubbish.

ELEANOR: But, but why?

IVOR: Because I was drunk. I was. I was drunk. I've barely been sober in twenty years. I can't, I can't remember the first thing about space science. Oh, Eleanor.

ELEANOR: Oh, Ivor. Was it after your wife was killed by the sweat vampire? Is that why you turned to alcohol?

IVOR: Good God, no. No, it was those loans. The loans started it. We'd re-mortgaged, you know.

MEL: Fascinating though this is

NICKY: Who's the murderer? That's what we want to know.

IVOR: Well, obviously. I'm quite surprised none of you have realised. I mean, quite plainly. Well, without any doubt in my mind, the murderer is urgh ack.

MEL: Quick! Revive him!

DOCTOR: Too late, I'm afraid.

ELEANOR: Ivor? Gone, and there was nothing I could do. I feel so helpless.

GERI: What has been... oh! The Professor!

DOCTOR: Right. The time has come for action.

GERI: You're going to cancel the contest?

DOCTOR: No. I'm putting Dark Space Eight into battlestations. Quarantine restrictions in full force. All subspace communications are suspended as from now. All security guards are to be armed with phasers.

MEL: Lasers.

DOCTOR: Lasers, set to stun. Patrols to be increased. The Concert hall is to be isolated immediately and entry permitted only to grade one operatives. Say nothing to the guests. We don't want a full-scale panic. Set to it, Ambassador.

GERI: Immediately, Commander.

DOCTOR: Eleanor, I want a full run of tests on the poor Professor. Nicky, back to the Concert hall. And Mel, we're going to have one of our little chats in the reading room.

MEL: The ready room.

DOCTOR: Oh, the ready room.

MEL: So, this means the Tardis is out there after all.

(Door closes.)

MEL: The late Professor simply couldn't work the machines properly.

DOCTOR: Drunk in charge of a particle scanner. Tut, tut, tut, tut.

MEL: Well, it means we could just leave them to their squabbling and clear off.

DOCTOR: I'm not sure whether to dignify that with an answer.

MEL: Just checking. Still, it means that we were wrong about the Professor.

DOCTOR: We?

MEL: All right, I was wrong. His sneaking off was just so he could have a sly drink. Oh, I've drawn a blank. What about you, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Hmm. I've got a couple of ideas. Look, Mel, could you go and keep an eye on things in the Concert hall, whilst I have a bit of a ponder? Our friend, whoever he or she may be, is here because of the contest. So, that's where we need to concentrate our investigations.

MEL: Fobbed off again. Okay. But when I get back, I want to hear all about your oh-so-secret theories.

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: I'm just hoping you don't meet one of them face to face.

STRINDBERG: The Concert hall is filling up, the orchestra are tuning up. It's certainly going to be good fun. Yes, in just fifteen minutes the Intergalactic Song Contest will begin. (mutters something) still fifteen minutes to go.

DOCTOR: Yes, if there was a way of um. But only if he'd overheard the. But that would mean  
(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Ah, Gholos.

(Fizzing.)

DOCTOR: Oh, forgive me. I'm having a little difficulty understanding you. Without your friend, that is.

LOOZLY: Commander.

DOCTOR: Gholos seems to be rather agitated.

LOOZLY: Gholos is desperate to reveal to you he has worked it all out. Angvia arranged the dinner with you to avoid being suspected of the Professor's murder, which was committed with a slow-acting Angvian poison.

DOCTOR: Was it?

LOOZLY: I have checked in the sickbay.

DOCTOR: Really?

LOOZLY: You must arrest Angvia.

DOCTOR: You're sure your friend doesn't have any more information? He seems a little over-excited.

LOOZLY: Merely desperate that you should act immediately on his intelligence.  
DOCTOR: Oh. Thank you. Both. I'll certainly look into it. Now, if you'll excuse me.  
LOOZLY: Very well. But heed our warning, Commander. Come, Gholos.  
DOCTOR: Aren't you going with him?  
(Fizz. Door closes.)  
GERI [OC]: Commander. Arbiter to Commander. Come in. Urgent.  
DOCTOR: This is no place for a good ponder. Commander here.  
GERI [OC]: Commander, I have grave news. It is Queen Angvia. She has been attacked in her own dressing room. Battered on the head.  
DOCTOR: Oh no! She isn't  
GERI [OC]: No, thank the stars. She must have fought back, scared off the murderer.  
DOCTOR: Call Eleanor. Get Angvia to the sickbay.  
GERI [OC]: What shall I do?  
DOCTOR: You, stay exactly where you are. Commander out.

ELEANOR: Commander, I've tried everything, but her lifesigns are very weak.  
DOCTOR: Let me see.  
ELEANOR: Angvian physiognomy is very different to ours.  
DOCTOR: You seem to have a very poor success rate in this sickbay, Eleanor. You're lucky there aren't league tables of performances between the space stations.  
ELEANOR: There are.  
DOCTOR: Ah. And we came?  
ELEANOR: Bottom. But only because of that outbreak of Scolostocks fever. I felt so  
DOCTOR: Helpless? Never mind that. Come on, Angvia. Try this.  
ELEANOR: What is that, Commander?  
DOCTOR: An old-fashioned pick-me-up. Smelling salts.  
ELEANOR: I don't think that'll help.  
DOCTOR: Wait. Oh, she looks so peaceful. So beautiful. Oh Angvia, my love.  
ELEANOR: John!  
DOCTOR: Oh, sorry. Er, she's coming round, I think.  
(Angvia groans.)

MEL: Oh, hurry up, Nicky. I should have been at the main hall ages ago. You're supposed to be helping me keep an eye on things.  
(Toilet flushes. Door opens.)  
NICKY: Look, I'm sorry, but I really am feeling sick. I should be rehearsing, you know.  
(Geri squealing and running.)  
NICKY: Hey, who's rattled your cage? Oh, sorry.  
GERI: Queen Angvia, she's been attacked.  
MEL: What? Where is she?  
GERI: The Commander sent guards to take her to sickbay.  
NICKY: But is she okay?  
GERI: I don't know. Oh, but Commander told me to stay here and  
MEL: Well then, do as he says and stay put.  
GERI: But I'm the Arbiter. It's my duty to do oh dear, I can't stop to chat with you. I must get away.  
NICKY: Mind out.  
(Geri leaves running and squealing.)  
NICKY: Actually, I should have stayed put. Crushed by a flying fur ball so I didn't have to sing.  
MEL: Nicky, I've got it.  
NICKY: What?  
MEL: What better cover?  
NICKY: What? Geri? But she's a Pakhar, a pacifist. The Pakhars are the only creatures trusted with missions like this. They're hosting the Peace Conference, for God's sake.  
MEL: A pacifist alien terrified of violence? The ideal smokescreen. What if Geri attacked Angvia and raised the alarm herself?  
NICKY: Geri wanted the contest to go ahead, remember? That doesn't square with what we know about the murderer.  
MEL: Brilliant! That's it! Geri wants the contest to go on, and blacken the name of Gholos throughout the galaxy.  
NICKY: You've lost me. What's Geri got against Gholos?  
MEL: Who knows? But it fits all the facts. All three murders could be blamed on Angvia. Now she gets attacked herself, the implication will be that Gholos was the murderer, posing as her.  
NICKY: Er, that's a bit complicated.



MEL: I'm a complicated kind of girl. Come on, let's follow her, see what she's up to.

NICKY: Who, Angvia?

MEL: Geri! Come on.

(Cheers. Drumroll, orchestra.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlebeings. Welcome one and all to the 309<sup>th</sup> Intergalactic Song Contest!

(Cheers, applause.)

ANNOUNCER: And your host for this evening, in a change to the regularly scheduled artiste, Lieutenant Sven Strindberg!

(Desultory applause.)

STRINDBERG: Hello, good evening, and welcome to Dark Space Eight on this beautiful starlit night, out here among the er, stars where the biggest er, stars are gathering for what promises to be a star-studded occasion. Oh God. Where's the thing? Oh, that. And kicking us off is act one from the Argol Cluster, here is Billionius Grufang with Argol's entry, Don't Push Your Tentacle Too Far.

(Sounds like a rusty machine powering up.)

MEL: There she goes.

NICKY: Mel, this is silly. My tummy's really playing up. I think I need the toilet again.

MEL: Tie a knot in it. This is important. Where's she creeping off to now?

NICKY: Looks like the kitchens.

MEL: Very suspicious. Come on.

(Angvia groans.)

ELEANOR: She's coming round. Well done, John.

DOCTOR: It was quite literally nothing. Ah, Queen Angvia. You're quite safe. Can you tell us who attacked you?

ANGVIA: But the implications of the territorial incursions by Gholos into our space in 61 Cygnii and the Questor Zone could not be ignored.

ELEANOR: It sounds like it could be severe cranial trauma.

DOCTOR: How very peculiar.

ANGVIA: Noted, but I cannot comply. I suggest we move on to discuss resolution 5 para 2b, the question of a Court of Resolution.

ELEANOR: It sounds political.

DOCTOR: Angvia said she knew nothing about politics. Unless.

MEL: Right, she's stopped. Keep quiet and I'll have a look-see.

NICKY: Careful.

MEL: Discretion is my middle name. Nicky!

NICKY: Shh.

MEL: Sorry, sorry. But what's that she's got?

NICKY: Give us a look. It's a subspace communicator.

MEL: But the Doc, Commander, banned them.

(Beeps.)

GERI: Utiliser to Base. All is going according to plan despite the difficulties. Do you have further intelligence?

MEL: Ah! That's it. Proof positive.

NICKY: Maybe she's in with those terrorists.

MEL: It doesn't matter. We've got to stop her.

NICKY: She's a fast mover, Mel.

MEL: But we've got surprise on our side. I'm going to drag her away. Be ready to get her arms. She might have a gun.

NICKY: Oh, God. Oh.

MEL: Carefully does it.

GERI: Understood. The most critical stage is almost

MEL: Gotcha! Keep still!

(Struggle. Geri squeals, then a crunch.)

MEL: Oh no, Geri! Geri!

NICKY: What have you done?

MEL: She hit her head on the floor grating. She was struggling.

NICKY: Do you know how delicate these things are?

MEL: No. I.

NICKY: Oh God. Oh God. Mel, you've killed her! You've killed the Arbiter.

ANGVIA: And the trade sanctions

ELEANOR: What does this mean, John?  
DOCTOR: I don't know. Or do I? Yes. Yes, of course. It all fits. Think about it.  
MEL [OC]: Commander.  
DOCTOR: Ah, Mel.  
MEL [OC]: I'm afraid something's happened. You'd better get down here and, and Commander? Bring the doctor.

ELEANOR: Get her onto the medi-sled. Quickly.  
MEL: I didn't know what I was doing.  
ELEANOR: Young lady, that is still to be determined. Quick, get her to sickbay.  
DOCTOR: Oh dear.  
MEL: Listen, I was only doing what I thought was right.  
DOCTOR: I think we need one of our private little chats.  
NICKY: You're getting rid of me again.  
DOCTOR: You're due on stage very soon.  
NICKY: We can't go through with it now.  
DOCTOR: We can, and you will. Leave us alone.  
NICKY: (receding) Okay, okay.  
MEL: Doctor, I'm sorry.  
DOCTOR: Sorry? Sorry? Mel, you've just attacked our greatest ally.  
MEL: Hold on. You don't know the half of it. Our ally was talking on a communicator about her plan.  
DOCTOR: Oh, Mel.  
MEL: What?  
DOCTOR: Haven't you worked it out? Didn't you realise?  
MEL: But I  
DOCTOR: The clues were all there. Geri is a high-ranking Ambassador.  
MEL: Yes.  
DOCTOR: Why is she here, at the Intergalactic Song Contest?  
MEL: Well, it's still important, isn't it?  
DOCTOR: More important than any of us realise.  
MEL: How?  
DOCTOR: Mel, all this talk of the Peace Conference on Achilles Four.  
MEL: Yes?  
DOCTOR: There is no Peace Conference on Achilles Four. Whatever's happening over there, it's nothing but a side show. Dark Space Eight is what matters. This is the Peace Conference.

#### **[Part Four]**

MEL: That doesn't make sense. Nobody would trust this lot with keeping the peace.  
DOCTOR: I'm not sure they know, Mel. Listen. Angvia's been knocked on the head.  
MEL: I know that, but she's  
DOCTOR: Mel! She's been saying some very unusual things.  
MEL: Well, that's no surprise.  
DOCTOR: Mel. And the unusual things she's been saying gave me the final clue to this whole sorry business.  
MEL: Well?  
DOCTOR: If I'm right, the contestants from Earth, Angvia and Gholos are unwitting pawns in the peace process. The conference on Achilles Four is a mere diversion. An easy and obvious target for the terrorist groups. Under cover of the song contest, the delegations have been brought together in secret.  
MEL: But they're singers, entertainers. You're not telling me that Nicky is a high ranking diplomat.  
DOCTOR: Well, no, but my guess is that he and the others have been implanted with subconscious telepathic imprints of the key delegates. When they arrived here at the station, within telepathic range of one another, those imprints would have been activated.  
MEL: So if you're right, the conference has been going on under our noses telepathically ever since.  
DOCTOR: Yes. Geri wasn't here to arbitrate on a song contest.  
MEL: She was here to ensure that the peace conference went ahead.  
DOCTOR: Eureka!  
MEL: Ah. One thing's still bothering me.  
DOCTOR: Really?  
MEL: How you can be so incorrigibly smug. Why didn't you tell me before instead of letting me run round like a loon accusing all and sundry?  
DOCTOR: Well, I didn't know for sure until Angvia was coshed.  
MEL: For sure, or at all?

DOCTOR: All right. At all.

MEL: So not quite the Great Detective.

DOCTOR: Well, I didn't want to run around like a loon accusing all and sundry.

MEL: Hmm. So now we know the background, but are we any further forward in discovering who the murderer is?

DOCTOR: Oh yes. The Great Detective's figured that one out too. Bring Nicky to the ready room.

ELEANOR: You must pull through, Arbiter. Dark Space Eight has seen enough death. Oh, I feel so. No. No. Where are those? Ah. Let's see if this works.

GERI: Oh! You're trying to kill me!

ELEANOR: Arbiter. Arbiter, you're quite safe.

GERI: Poison. It's poison.

ELEANOR: Smelling salts, Miss Pakhar. An innovation of the Commander's. You're in sickbay. You've taken a nasty knock to the head.

GERI: A nasty? Oh wait, I remember. That girl, the pilot, she tried to kill me. Oh!

ELEANOR: Please, keep calm. We are investigating the attack. Pilot Mel is assisting the Commander with any

GERI: You mean she's still loose? A maniac loose aboard Dark Space Eight? Another maniac loose aboard Dark Space Eight? No. No, no. She must be behind it. I insist she is locked in the brig, clapped in irons. That girl is a menace to us all! Oh!

(Door opens during above speech.)

DOCTOR: Nonsense. Mel is a menace to nobody. Well, almost nobody. I'm glad to see that you're feeling better, Arbiter.

ELEANOR: I'm afraid she's still very weak, Commander.

DOCTOR: Yes, well, I'll take things from here, Doctor Harcourt. Perhaps you could join the others in the guest lounge. I'll be in shortly.

ELEANOR: But Commander, my duties

DOCTOR: Are temporarily suspended. Please, Eleanor.

ELEANOR: Very well, Commander.

(Door closes. Angvia cries out.)

DOCTOR: Angvia, what?

ANGVIA: I am on. I must go.

DOCTOR: No, wait.

ANGVIA: My makeup, my wardrobe, my wig! The shame!

(Door opens and closes.)

DOCTOR: Oh well.

GERI: Look, Commander, what is all this about?

DOCTOR: I think we have a great deal to talk about, Miss Pakhar. Are you sitting comfortably?

(Cheers and applause.)

STRINDBERG: And thank you, the Architects of Algol 7. Next up it's time to welcome a lady that you all know, from a planet that you all know. It's the Four Tops! No, I'm sorry, it isn't. It's Angvia!

(Lots of drums.)

ANGVIA: ♪ I sing! I sing of Angvia! Most likely to win! Most beautiful men! Gor-raz A Det! Gor-raz A Det! Sweet Angvia! Oh Angvia. Gor-raz A Det! I sing,♪

ANGVIA [OC]: ♪ I sing! I sing!♪

LOOZLY: That hideous woman. If that is what passes for music on her homeworld, I

(Turns off feed.)

NICKY: Oh no. There's only another few acts and then it's me.

ELEANOR: Why has the Commander told us to wait here? I have duties in sickbay, and you two should be getting ready in the arena.

MEL: The Commander knows what he's doing, believe me. If he says we stay here, we stay here.

ELEANOR: For a mere pilot, you seem to know the Commander very well.

(Cheers off.)

NICKY: Oh God.

MEL: Nicky, what is it?

NICKY: It's my tummy. It's going loop the loop. Feels like something's crawled in there and died.

MEL: Take deep breaths. Just think, the moment you step out onto the stage you'll feel fine. All your fears and doubts will melt away.

NICKY: Oh God! Quick!

MEL: Quick, bag.

(Nicky vomits.)

MEL: Urgh.

LOOZLY: Disgusting.

(Door opens and closes.)

ANGVIA: In here? I cannot see why I

GUARD: Commander's orders, madam.

ANGVIA: There, my performance, it is certain to win. That was a triumph! Well, didn't anybody like it?

MEL: It was lovely. Well done. (claps)

NICKY: Oh no. Now there's only the Breebles, those cephalopod things, and the Drahvins to go, and then it's Earth. Me!

MEL: For goodness' sakes, stop being so selfish.

NICKY: You'd feel selfish with a stomach like mine.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Ah. Here we all are.

(Door closed and locked.)

MEL: Commander, we've been waiting for you.

DOCTOR: Good.

ELEANOR: Arbiter, are you sure you're well enough to be on your feet?

GERI: Quite sure, Doctor Harcourt.

MEL: Oh, and look, Geri, about earlier. I'm so sorry.

DOCTOR: Later, Mel.

(Coffee maker noise.)

LOOZLY: What is that thing, Arbiter?

GERI: A simple mechanical device that the Commander has just

DOCTOR: Later, later, Arbiter. Well now, I suppose you're all wondering why I've called you all here.

MEL: To unmask the murderer, surely.

DOCTOR: Well, yes. Yes, yes. Well, right then. I've pressure-locked the doors, and there are guards posted outside. Nobody can leave this drawing room.

MEL: Ready room.

DOCTOR: Ready room.

LOOZLY: Commander, please be brief. Gholos is anxious to get back to the hall.

DOCTOR: This is the denouement, Mister Loozly. I'll take as long as I like. Now, someone in this room is a murderer.

MEL: We know. Just tell us who it is, will you?

(The Chipmunks finish their happy song. Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: Ah, bless them. The Breebles there. Quite a favourite to win, I think. The excitement here is actually quite infectious. Even I'm starting to enjoy myself. Well, not that I wasn't before, of course, but anyway, there's a lot more excitement to come, and perhaps one or two surprises.

DOCTOR: Achilles Four is a sham. This is the real Peace Conference. Somebody here intends to destroy it, and the murders were committed to throw suspicion onto one party.

(Consternation.)

ANGVIA: This is a conference? What nonsense.

GERI: All true, your Majesty. A telepathic conference. The only way to ensure the negotiations could proceed uninterrupted.

LOOZLY: Rubbish. And even if it were true, it obviously didn't work.

DOCTOR: Not quite. Because someone knew all along, eh, Doctor Harcourt?

ELEANOR: John!

DOCTOR: As a doctor, you're not exactly up there with the greats, are you?

ELEANOR: What do you mean?

DOCTOR: I feel so helpless. I've run a series of tests. The results are negative. Inconclusive.

ELEANOR: I've always tried my best.

DOCTOR: And yet so many people have died. You said Cyrene died from natural causes. Wrong. You said Angvian physiognomy was different from human physiognomy. Wrong. You didn't see that Professor Fassbinder had been poisoned, and it was staring you in the face. You couldn't revive Angvia when all she had was a bump on the head.

ELEANOR: John, I don't know what to say.

DOCTOR: No, you never do. The thing that puzzled me almost from the very beginning

LOOZLY: Yes?

DOCTOR: Mel, when we found the Cyrene, you accidentally called me Doctor. I don't know why.

MEL: Er, yes, I was a bit confused, I suppose.

DOCTOR: I looked up and answered you because, among my many qualifications, I am in fact a doctor.

MEL: I never knew that.

DOCTOR: I looked up, but Eleanor didn't, because she is not a doctor.

(Sound of masticating to a fast beat, finishing with a bathtub draining. Polite applause.)

STRINDBERG: Well, er, a very expressive and interesting er song there from the Cissalian Cephalopods. Perhaps not entirely this audience's cup of tea, or glass of beer, rather. (cheers) I'm getting rather good at this.

ANGVIA: But Doctor Harcourt, you must be a doctor.

ELEANOR: I, I, no. No, I am not. The Commander is right.

DOCTOR: Let's hear the truth for once. You aren't qualified in space medicine and a dozen other subjects.

ELEANOR: No. But I wanted to be. I wanted to hurry down corridors in a spotless white gown, my nostrils flaring. I wanted to carry out tests. I wanted to cure people and carry out dangerous operations. And I did.

DOCTOR: You pretended. No wonder so many people have died over the years with you in charge.

ELEANOR: But some survived. I did some good. I stowed away here on a shuttle years ago, told everybody I was a doctor on attachment to Dark Space Eight, and they just believed me. I think I started to believe it myself. I felt so helpless.

MEL: I get it. You committed the murders because you were being blackmailed.

ELEANOR: No! I had nothing to do with the murders.

ANGVIA: Why should we believe you now?

GERI: Because she's telling the truth.

LOOZLY: How do you know that? The woman is a self-confessed liar.

ELEANOR: But not murder. Never murder.

MEL: Come on, Commander. Give us the proof.

DOCTOR: Proof? There is no proof. Because Eleanor is not the murderer.

MEL: What? Then for goodness' sakes who is?

DOCTOR: Ah.

MEL: Who is it?

DOCTOR: Perhaps we should turn our attentions to you, Nicky Newman.

(Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: Well, the tension is really building here in the auditorium as we wait for the next part of tonight's show to be played out. And I'm told that this next segment is a doozy. Let's see what you think at home.

DOCTOR: Yes, Nicky, you've been hovering in the background all along. The perfect innocent.

MEL: But it can't be him.

DOCTOR: Why not? Nobody has suspected him, even for a moment.

NICKY: No, it's not me.

ANGVIA: What?

NICKY: I've never killed anyone. Oh no, I'm going to end up in the middle of a miscarriage of justice. Oh God, I'm going to be sick again.

MEL: You're not saying he killed three people just so he wouldn't have to sing? That's ludicrous.

DOCTOR: Indeed. Utterly ludicrous.

MEL: But

DOCTOR: But what?

ANGVIA: Aren't you going to say but, and then tell us why he did it?

DOCTOR: No. Because he is what he appears. Innocent.

MEL: Then why bring him here?

DOCTOR: Because I wanted to distract him from the contest and make him realise how trivial his worries are. I hope I've taught you a lesson, young man.

NICKY: You mean, you don't think it's me?

DOCTOR: Of course it isn't you. You're nothing to do with it.

NICKY: Oh, thank God.

DOCTOR: So, in a moment you can go and sing and stop making such a blithering fuss. Just learn your lines and try not to bump into the orchestra.

MEL: Right. Now, please, who is it?

DOCTOR: Who do you think? The shuttle was destroyed by an Angvian scatter-bomb. Cyrene was killed with Angvian poison. Professor Fassbinder was killed by Angvian neural bind.

ANGVIA: No. No!

MEL: Yes. And she tried to corrupt you, Commander.

DOCTOR: Hmm. Though admittedly we were warned about that.

MEL: But, what, you mean the note? I thought that didn't make sense.

DOCTOR: Oh, but it did. Beware the pits of Angvia. Geri?

GERI: Yes, it was I who tried to warn the Commander. I have heard of the Angvian love rituals.

ANGVIA: No!

GERI: Yes. I have special access to certain documents, and among them was one pertaining to the Angvian pheromone glands.

ANGVIA: We Angvians are renowned

DOCTOR: For being almost irresistible to most males because of the chemicals you excrete from the glands in your pits.

MEL: I get it. In her *arm* pits. That's why you took a funny turn.

LOOZLY: At last, Commander. This is what Gholos has been trying to tell you all along. Angvia is a murderess and a threat to us all.

DOCTOR: Yes.

ANGVIA: No, Commander! My little man, no.

DOCTOR: Yes, Gholos has been trying to tell us who the murderer is all along.

LOOZLY: Exactly.

DOCTOR: We should have listened.

LOOZLY: Arrest her.

MEL: So it was Angvia?

DOCTOR: Oh no, Mel. Whatever made you think that?

MEL: What?

DOCTOR: Geri, switch on the translator.

(The translator has been programmed with Logan's voice.)

GHOLOS: Ah yes, it is Loozly. Loozly is the murderer.

(Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: And now we can take a peek into the contestant's green room where the atmosphere is electronic. Electric. There we have the Zilphens. Quite a wait for them tonight. And over there are the Breebles, celebrating their rapturous reception by oh. Oh dear. Naughty Breebles. Anyway, moving swiftly on.

GHOLOS: Uh, uh, uh, it's all over for you now, Loozly.

LOOZLY: This is nonsense. That is not the voice of Gholos. It's that, that, that commentator.

GERI: That is purely perceptual. This unit was being worked on by Mister Logan before he met his death. The Doctor has completed his work. The voice synthesiser was programmed from Logan's own voice, it would seem.

DOCTOR: Now, Mister Loozly, the fierce Gholosian nationalist. Of course you'd be bitterly opposed to the peace process. From your friends in Earth security you learned about the fake peace conference, and inveigled your way here as Gholos's translator.

LOOZLY: This is lies, all lies.

DOCTOR: I imagine you planned to destroy the conference, the whole station, make your escape, and throw all the blame onto the Angvian retrospectively.

MEL: By framing her.

DOCTOR: Yes. He tried to destroy our shuttle with what looked like an Angvian scatter-bomb. You killed Cyrene and Ivor with Angvian weapons, then you coshed Angvia to make the others think she was double-bluffing.

LOOZLY: You have a very active imagination, Commander.

DOCTOR: Why, thank you. It's always been one of my ambitions to write the Great Intergalactic Novel.

MEL: Back to the point.

DOCTOR: Oh yes. But real life has a habit of being stranger than fiction. It must have been very frustrating for you, Loozly. Nobody rose to your bait, did they? With a chief scientist and medical officer who couldn't tell a scatter-bomb or Angvian poison from their elbows, your plan didn't work as well as it might have.

ANGVIA: Thank goodness you're a genuine commander, Commander.

DOCTOR: Quite. But even I

MEL: Oh, please.

DOCTOR: Even I only realised for sure when I noticed the change in Gholos's behaviour, when he came to the ready room earlier, followed by Loozly. The only time anyone had seen him without you.

MEL: Except me, when it attacked me. He called it off.

GHOLOS: I was not attacking you, young human. I was just trying to tell you what I'd just discovered, that Loozly had killed Cyrene.

NICKY: But you couldn't because he was translating for you.

GHOLOS: Exactly. And then he started to subdue me with his so-called monitor device. He threatened to cut me off from the gestalt completely. And ever since then, he has misreported everything I was trying to say.

NICKY: Why isn't his control box working now?

DOCTOR: Geri?

GERI: Because I built a wide-range dampening function into the translator unit. I suspected he must have some sort of hold over you.

GHOLOS: Then I must thank you, Arbiter.

DOCTOR: So, you can take your finger off that button, Loozly.

ELEANOR: But why would Loozly kill Logan the commentator?

DOCTOR: Because he was working on this translator device. He was talking about it when Loozly was in the rest sphere.

MEL: Of course! He would have blown his plan clean out of the water.

DOCTOR: Exactly. So, Loozly had to put him out of the way. Bit of a rush job that one, though. No time to concoct an Angvian attack, so a knife in the back and problem solved. Strange that the Professor seemed to have cottoned on. Obviously he wasn't quite the wreck we all took him for. Was that why you bumped him off, Mister Loozly?

LOOZLY: Pah.

ANGVIA: But wait. The Gholos creature turned red. The Red Sting of Gholos. He must have been working with this human.

GHOLOS: (laughs) There's no such thing as the Red Sting.

DOCTOR: We all took red to mean Gholos was angry, dangerous. In fact, it was a warning light.

GHOLOS: I was trying to communicate with you, the only way I could.

DOCTOR: Well, Mister Loozly? Anything to say?

LOOZLY: What's the point of pretending? Yes, I did it. I did it all. And I'd do it all again. All for the love of Gholos! The gestalt is a wonderful thing. Serene, implacable, timeless. It must never be sullied by contact with the Angvian filth. Gholos is pure. Pure, I say! This, this splinter of Gholos has already been tainted by contact with, with you fleshy fools.

NICKY: But you're as much a fleshy fool as any of us.

LOOZLY: Oh, I wish I wasn't.

DOCTOR: Guard Captain.

GUARD: Yes, sir.

DOCTOR: Take this man away, poor misguided fool that he is.

LOOZLY: Oh, Commander, you're an intelligent man. Don't you understand?

DOCTOR: Understand, Mister Loozly? I'll tell you what I understand. This is a big universe. Centuries of hate, the clash of cultures, death on all sides, nothing but pride and death. It's time to drop it. We've got to live together. Our one short silly meaningless lives are important. Join the universe, Mister Loozly. Leave hate behind.

LOOZLY: Yes. Yes, you're right. Of course you're right. Perhaps I have been misguided. I never wanted to kill. It was just that

(Thud, thump, Angvia cries out.)

LOOZLY: Right. One move from any of you and Angvia will be the first to die.

DOCTOR: Loozly, no!

MEL: Let her go. This isn't going to help you.

LOOZLY: No? Then perhaps this will.

NICKY: Look, mate, you heard what the Arbiter said. Your little control gizmo won't work any more. Now just give up.

LOOZLY: Perhaps the hairy pest managed to block my subjugation beam, but I wouldn't be willing to bet that she's blocked the signal from this switch.

GERI: Er, what does that do?

LOOZLY: I press this, the station is destroyed immediately. Simple as that.

MEL: But that's crazy. You'd die too.

LOOZLY: Worth it, to save the gestalt.

ANGVIA: He is bluffing. You must argh.

LOOZLY: That's enough from you. Commander, you will prepare a shuttle for me. Angvia will accompany me as my insurance. I can assure you she will come to no harm. (laughs) Well, perhaps assure might be overstating it.

DOCTOR: It seems I underestimated you, Mister Loozly. You're not only misguided, you're also utterly insane.

LOOZLY: Sticks and stones, Commander. Now, do as I say or argh!

(Fizzing, thud.)

GHOLOS: Let the Blue Sting of Gholos do its work. I am avenged.

(Loozly lets out a long death rattle.)

DOCTOR: Your Majesty, are you all right?

ANGVIA: Oh, it, it saved my life.

GHOLOS: The human Loozly is dead. So perish all who dare to threaten the gestalt.

ANGVIA: I, I thank you, Gholos.

GHOLOS: And I thank you, Commander, for freeing me.

DOCTOR: It was nothing. Any passing genius would have done the same. But if you want to do me a favour, speak with Angvia. I feel sure that your two races can find some common ground. Agreed?

GHOLOS: I owe you a debt. If that is how you wish to be repaid.

ANGVIA: And we of Angvia owe Gholos a debt. The meeting will be arranged.

DOCTOR: Wonderful. Well, I think that just about

MEL: Ah, hold on, genius. How did Loozly intend to destroy the station?

DOCTOR: Oh yes. Oh, well remembered, Mel, yes. I'm sure we'll find something large and loud, probably one of those nasty bomb things, hidden amongst his things if we search his room.

GERI: I suggest we return to our duties.

TANNOY: Mister White to arena.

NICKY: Oh no. I've got to go on, then.

MEL: Sounds like it.

DOCTOR: Haven't you learned your lesson, young man?

NICKY: Yeah, yeah. I'm fine now. You really made me see that there's nothing to be afraid of. I mean, what is it? All I have to do is stand up and sing in front of billions of people. It's not like oh.

ANGVIA: Come, child. I will lead you to the stage.

NICKY: I mean, it's all been a bit of a shock, all these revelations. And Mister Loozly, I thought he was nice. He was really kind to me.

(Door opens.)

MEL: Make sure he goes on.

ANGVIA: I will.

NICKY: See you later, Mel. Oh, do I have to?

(Door closes.)

GERI: I must also return to my duties. Gholos, will you join me?

GHOLOS: Oh, I mean, yes, Arbiter. Catch you later, everyone.

(Door opens and closes.)

MEL: Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes?

MEL: Eleanor.

DOCTOR: Oh, yes. Well, what have you got to say for yourself, Miss Harcourt?

ELEANOR: John, I'm, I'm so sorry. I just wanted to live my dream.

DOCTOR: Ah. I suppose we ought to just let you slip quietly away.

MEL: Doctor! This woman's caused untold deaths through her fantasising. You can't just let her slip away.

DOCTOR: No. No, I suppose I can't. Oh, that's for the jury to decide. Take her away, Captain.

GUARD: Yes, sir.

ELEANOR: Oh, John. John. (crying)

(Door opens and closes.)

MEL: That's more like it.

DOCTOR: Hmm. I'm not so sure I like all this commanding. Too many difficult decisions. Well, Mel, let's find the Tardis, shall we, so I can get back to some good old-fashioned Doctoring again.

(Theme tune starts.)

MEL: Doctor.

(Theme tune scrapes to a halt.)

DOCTOR: Yes?

MEL: It's too easy.

DOCTOR: What?

MEL: The way everything's been wrapped up.

DOCTOR: Well, it has. Hasn't it?

(Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: And that was the Drahvin entry. Marga 29 there with Cloned Love. Now, who's next? Oh yes, I see, the old home planet. Earth has given us so many great songs over the centuries. Greensleeves, Mull of Kintyre, and of course Right On Time. And now we have Nicky Newman!

(Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: Yes, as I was saying, here's Nicky! Yes, here he is. Oh. Apparently someone's just handed me a piece of paper to say there's been a slight delay. So we are all to join in with the Earth National Anthem.

(Organ plays.)

ALL: ♪ At first I was afraid ♪

(Door opens and closes.)

GUARD: (Michael Caine) Commander Ballard. We've searched Mister Loozly's quarters. There is no bomb.



MEL: See? It's like I said. Too easy.

DOCTOR: He must have planted the bomb somewhere else.

GUARD: Impossible, sir. We've carried out a full security scan, double-checked the entire station. There is no bomb.

MEL: So Loozly was bluffing? No. That just doesn't add up.

DOCTOR: Quite right. Well?

MEL: Well what?

DOCTOR: Any ideas?

MEL: Come on, Doctor, I'm relying on you to be two steps ahead as per.

(Door opens.)

ANGVIA: Ah, Commander, Melanie.

(Door closes.)

ANGVIA: I have just delivered Nicky to the concert hall. He protested, but we women of Angvia accept no quibbles from our menfolk.

DOCTOR: Shush, Angvia. I'm just trying to work something out. Now, this station is bristling with security devices. Now how could he get a bomb on board?

MEL: Well, it must have been camouflaged.

GUARD: Everything brought aboard the station is scanned.

ANGVIA: The boy's jumping like an Angvian leaping bean.

DOCTOR: How do you smuggle an explosive powerful enough to rip apart twenty million tons of super-bonded herculanium?

ANGVIA: Well, I would use an Angvian personal destructor.

MEL: It must be enormous.

DOCTOR: Not necessarily. It could be tiny and still enormously destructive.

ANGVIA: An Angvian personal destructor would do it. One of our greatest weapons.

MEL: Loozly came in on the relay shuttle flight with Nicky. Perhaps he saw something?

DOCTOR: Good thinking. We'll question him after his song.

ANGVIA: An Angvia personal destructor would be the perfect weapon, but Gholos lag centuries behind our technology. Loozly could not have obtained such a device.

DOCTOR: Oh, I dare... what? What? But he had those other Angvia weapons.

MEL: What is a personal destructor anyway?

ANGVIA: It is quite ingenious. A tiny fragment of modulated black star matter coated in a tasteless pill. The subject swallows it unknowingly, it attaches itself to the lining of the digestive tract where it reacts to the stress levels of the hosts body. When the host gets agitated or excited

MEL: What?

ANGVIA: It explodes with the force of fifty scatter-bombs!

DOCTOR: That's absolutely beastly.

MEL: Doctor

DOCTOR: A gross perversion of science.

MEL: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Your race may have a mastery of advanced technology, Angvia, but your scruples are lagging centuries behind.

MEL: Doctor!

DOCTOR: What?

MEL: Nicky.

DOCTOR: Where?

MEL: Nicky, the destructor, tasteless pills, stress levels.

DOCTOR: Mel, if you've nothing worthwhile to contribute, I suggest you. Oh.

ANGVIA: What is it?

MEL: Nicky came in on the shuttle. He felt ill, and Loozly looked after him, gave him an aspirin.

DOCTOR: But he's about to go on stage!

MEL: Extremely agitated.

DOCTOR: Quickly, Mel, the arena!

ANGVIA: What is going on?

DOCTOR: If we don't stop him, bang-bang-a-boom!

ALL: ♪ I will survive.♪

(Applause.)

STRINDBERG: Great! Oh. Oh, I've just been passed another piece of paper. Nicky Newman has now arrived and is ready to appear.

(Cheers.)

(Both breathless.)

DOCTOR: Hurry, Mel. Is this the way?

MEL: Down this corridor.

DOCTOR: Whatever happens, don't tell him the truth or he'll blow up there and then.

MEL: Okay, okay.

STRINDBERG: So here, representing Earth, is Nicky Newman!

MEL: Psst. Nicky!

NICKY: Oh, not now, Mel. I've got to go on.

MEL: How are you feeling?

NICKY: Terrible. My tummy's going over, my legs like rubber bands. I can barely stand up. But other than that.

MEL: I'm sure there's nothing to worry about. In fact, the Commander and I were just saying

DOCTOR: That there's absolutely no reason for you to go on after all. I mean, if you don't want to.

STRINDBERG: Nicky Newman!

NICKY: It's too late now, isn't it?

DOCTOR: No, no, no. No, don't worry. Take it easy. Take a few deep breaths. Why not go back to your cabin, read a book, something long and pastoral. A Mrs Gaskell or something.

MEL: I know. I'll give you a massage.

DOCTOR: Oh yes. Mel's an excellent neck-rubber.

MEL: There's a lot of tension in your shoulders.

DOCTOR: I'll run you a foot bath.

NICKY: Look, I can't back out now.

DOCTOR: All right, it's all right. I've worked it all out for you with the Arbiter. I'm going on instead. You needn't worry.

MEL: Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes, I shall go on.

STRINDBERG: Nicky Newman.

NICKY: Oh, really?

MEL: Don't tell me you want to go on now?

NICKY: Well, no. Yes. No.

STRINDBERG: The Earth entry, Nicky Newman. Get a shift on.

DOCTOR: It's showtime!

NICKY: But this is my gig!

MEL: Too late. Now, come on, Nicky. Let's go back to your cabin.

NICKY: Oh.. I think I'm beginning to see. Right. Okay. How exciting.

MEL: No, no, no! No, I mean, I thought we should just have a quiet, calming chat. Nothing exciting. Nothing to get the pulse racing. Oh no. Look over there.

NICKY: What?

MEL: Oof!

NICKY: Oh! (thud)

MEL: Sorry.

STRINDBERG: Er, I'm not sure what. Oh wait, here he is, Nicky Newman!

DOCTOR: Good evening, Dark Space Eight. Let's get this show on the road. Lights, cameras, spoons! And music, maestro, please.

(The Doctor plays the spoons to a funky disco beat and wild cheers.)

MEL: Well, you're either fatter than you look or that black star bomb is heavier than it has any right to me.

Oh, phew. Made it. Guard? Anybody about?

GERI: What is going on here?

MEL: Geri, can you give me a hand getting him onto the bed?

GERI: Oh yes, of course.

(Effort.)

MEL: Careful he doesn't go off.

GERI: Go off? What do you

MEL: I mean, no time to explain, Arbiter. Oh, hurry up, Doctor. Can we switch the vision on from here?

GERI: I believe so.

DOCTOR [OC]: Thank you, thank you. Now, have you heard the one about the triple-headed Barastabolian Ambassador and the High Priest?

MEL: Oh, give me strength.

(Cheers.)

STRINDBERG: Well, it's certainly turning out to be an interesting evening. And as er Commander Ballard

leaves the stage after his unconventional performance, we move straight on to the entry from Ferrez-Feron. Probably not quite so many spoons in this one.

DOCTOR: Ah, well, that went rather well, I think. Oh ho, missed your vocation there, Doctor. Now, which way. Which way? Hmm.

MEL: Oh, where is he?

GERI: Is there nothing I can do, Melanie?

MEL: Not unless you're qualified in space medicine. Although that doesn't seem to count for much on this space station.

DOCTOR: Stand aside. Celebrity coming through.

MEL: Oh, about time.

DOCTOR: Sorry, Mel, but I couldn't disappoint my public.

MEL: Well, if you don't get a move on, your public is going to be floating about in space in little bits.

DOCTOR: Yes. Oh yes. Well, let's get started, eh? Come on in.

ELEANOR: But John.

MEL: What? You can't be serious.

DOCTOR: Someone has to conduct this operation and get that bomb out, Mel. I haven't got the required skill. Eleanor is Nicky's only hope.

GERI: No. She's nothing more than a fantasist.

DOCTOR: A fantasist with years of practical experience, Arbiter. It's not an ideal situation but we're stuck with it, and time is of the essence. Now, Eleanor.

ELEANOR: I, I understand, Commander. I'll do my best.

DOCTOR: That's all we can ask.

ELEANOR: Very well. Pass me the medi-trolley, please. Now, clamps.

GERI: Clamps.

ELEANOR: Swab.

GERI: Swab.

DOCTOR: I think we should leave them to it, Mel. There's still the little matter of a peace conference to arbitrate.

ICE LORD [OC]: And that concludes the voting of the Martian jury. Ssss.

STRINDBERG [OC]: And we'll be back in just a couple of moments with the final result. Stay tuned.

MEL: How are you feeling now?

NICKY: Pretty good. A bit sore. Not as sore as my record company's going to be.

MEL: I suppose you missed out on a lot of publicity tonight.

NICKY: Yeah. But at least I didn't blow up thousands of people. That might have been a bit of a PR sore point.

MEL: Just a smidge.

NICKY: Still, at least I wouldn't have been around to face the music. I've got a vidi-meeting with my manager tomorrow morning, and I'm not looking forward to that very much.

MEL: Oh, come on, Nicky Newman, after what you've been through I'd have thought you'd be able to stand up for yourself a bit more.

NICKY: You haven't met my manager. Still, I reckon I could make a packet on the chat shows.

MEL: My explosive experience. Yes, I dare say you're right. Hello, Geri. How's it all going in there?

GERI: The telepathic negotiations have concluded, and as Mister Newman was indisposed, the Commander stood in as the Earth Arbiter. I am delighted to report that both sides have sued for peace at long last. What a relief for the galaxy!

ANGVIA: Indeed.

GHOLOS: Together we can a lasting peace, I'm sure.

GERI: Miss Harcourt is awaiting the arrival of a Galactic Peace transport. I hope that her work at saving Mister Newman this evening will mitigate in her favour when she comes to face trial.

NICKY: Too right. If it wasn't for her, brr.

GERI: Strangest of all, however, I have just received a communiqué from Earth. This is a visi-print of Commander Ballard.

NICKY: But that isn't the Commander.

DOCTOR: Hello all. Ah, the Tardis. How are you, old girl? Well done for getting her back, Mel. Well, the voting's nearly over, the galaxy is at peace and er. Why are you all staring at me like that?

MEL: You'd better take a look at this.

DOCTOR: Hmm. That face looks rather familiar.

MEL: Well, it's the real Commander Ballard. I think it's time we came clean.

DOCTOR: Ah.

MEL: You see, the real Commander Ballard and his pilot were killed in the shuttle.

DOCTOR: Which we had arrived on only moments before in our own craft.

ALL: What?

ANGVIA: Then who are you?

DOCTOR: Ah. Well, some things are best kept secret.

MEL: No, there's been enough secrets. He's a Time Lord, I'm from Earth. We travel through Time and Space in that blue box. It's called the Tardis.

GHOLOS: (laughs) A Time Lord? But surely Time Lords are mere creatures of myth and legend.

DOCTOR: You can be a myth and still be real. Just ask my friend Clytemnestra.

ANGVIA: Such a relief. It is no wonder you managed to resist my advances if you are one of these beings.

MEL: Yes, why did you try to seduce the Doctor?

ANGVIA: Well, the Commander was supposed to be collating the contest results.

NICKY: You were trying to nobble him. You cheat!

DOCTOR: Ah ha. It takes more than the pits of Angvia to nobble me.

STRINDBERG [OC]: Attention everyone, and welcome back. Well, the results are in and it is with great pleasure that I can now confirm the final result of the 309<sup>th</sup> Intergalactic Song Contest.

GERI: But why did you impersonate the Commander?

DOCTOR: It seemed like a good idea at the time, to keep me out of trouble.

STRINDBERG [OC]: And the winner is Earth! Commander John Ballard with er some spoons!

MEL: Out of trouble? Doctor, you just won the Intergalactic Song Contest.

DOCTOR: Really? Have I?

GERI: The press will want interviews, spreads, features on your home life.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. I'm not sure that would be a very good idea. Forgive me, everybody, but I really think it's time we were going. Come on, Mel, into the Tardis.

(Tardis door opens.)

MEL: Are we just going to leave? What about the interviews?

DOCTOR: Fair words butter no parsnips, Mel.

MEL: Doctor, you promised not to do that anymore.

DOCTOR: That's a real one.

MEL: Really?

DOCTOR: Yes! Goodbye everybody

GERI+ANGVIA: Goodbye.

GHOLOS: Ah yes, goodbye.

NICKY: Bye, Mel. Though I don't know where you think you're going in that thing.

(Tardis door closes.)

DOCTOR [OC]: Mere words will not find salt for your porridge or butter for your parsnips. See, I told you so.

MEL [OC]: Oh, Doctor.

(The Tardis dematerialises.)

ANGVIA: Goodbye, my little man, and good luck.